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Introduction

Richard Nixon thought everyone ought to be more civil. According to Yale historian and leading grand strategy scholar John Lewis Gaddis, that was Nixon's grand strategy: that he and his administration could "convince Kremlin leaders that it was in their country's interest to be 'contained'" by entangling the Soviet Union in "the existing world order." Once the Soviets became invested in maintaining global stability, their confrontation with the United States would fade and the Cold War would be over.[1] Of course this could not happen all at once. Nixon and his national security advisor, Harvard professor Henry Kissinger, thought they could phase out the Cold War by shifting relations with the Soviet Union from an atmosphere of confrontation to one of "restraint, coexistence, and, ultimately, cooperation."[2] They would end the Cold War by gradually easing tensions between the world's two superpowers, a strategy that came to be known as détente.

Gaddis describes six key features of détente in his book *Strategies of Containment*, an exposition of the diverse ways U.S. administrations prosecuted the Cold War. First, it relied on negotiations between the U.S. and USSR as the principle venue of competition. Second, it required those negotiations to be connected by what was known as "linkage," or the idea that the outcome of negotiations in one arena would impact negotiations in another. Third, the United States would normalize relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Communist government in Beijing that was the Soviet Union's main rival in the Communist world. Fourth, the United States would shrink its global military footprint. Fifth, the administration would balance its strategic withdrawals with tactical escalations, just as it did in Southeast Asia when it expanded its bombing campaigns against North Vietnam and Cambodia while withdrawing U.S.

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[1] John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 287.
[2] Ibid., 280-281.

ground troops. Finally, in order to be successful, Nixon needed complete centralized control over his foreign policy apparatus.[3]

Of these six principles, the two most significant changes on the world stage were the downsizing of the global U.S. military presence and the focus on negotiations. The trauma of the Vietnam War made downsizing the U.S. military a political necessity for Nixon. U.S. involvement on the Indochina peninsula had been escalating rapidly since the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Incident, when North Vietnamese forces allegedly attacked two U.S. warships. In total, two and a half million U.S. soldiers fought in Vietnam, 58,000 lost their lives, and Washington spent $30 billion a year at the war's peak. In 1968, when Richard Nixon ran for president, half a million U.S. troops were in Vietnam.[4] Antiwar sentiment was turning U.S. politics to chaos, and Congress was finished pouring blood and treasure into Vietnam. Thus Nixon declared an overhaul in U.S. military strategy: the United States would honor all its existing treaty commitments and provide a nuclear shield for its allies and other strategic countries, but U.S. allies would have to take primary responsibility for their own defense. This was known as the Nixon Doctrine, and it was a central feature of détente because it guided how the administration would downsize the U.S. global military footprint.[5] With a smaller military presence, the administration would compete with the Soviet Union primarily in the diplomatic arena through negotiations.[6]

Nixon planned on creating a global environment favorable for expanded negotiations and a retracted military by normalizing relations with the People's Republic of China. Because Beijing was Moscow's main rival for leadership of the communist world, cooperative U.S.-PRC

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[3] Gaddis, 287; 290; 292-293; 296; 297; 299.
[4] Spencer C. Tucker et al., *The Encyclopedia of the Cold War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara, CA:ABC-CLIO, 2008), s.v. "Vietnam War (1957-1975)," 1385-1386.
[5] Gaddis, 296.
[6] Ibid., 287.

relations would allow the administration to play the two Communist giants off each another and give the United States greater diplomatic leverage over the USSR. But better relations with Beijing would also make a war with Communist China less likely, and thus a global military withdrawal would be less risky.[7] Effective implementation of détente thus hinged on normalizing relations with the PRC.

The problem was Nixon assumed that normalized relations with the PRC, a global U.S. military drawdown, and gradually reduced tensions with the USSR "did not mean a withdrawal from existing obligations" around the world.[8] The first principle of the Nixon Doctrine was that the United States would honor all its treaty commitments. Maintaining all U.S. treaty commitments, however, conflicted with normalizing relations with the PRC, because the United States did not recognize the People's Republic of China. Instead, it recognized and had a Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of China.

When the Communists declared victory in the Chinese civil war in 1949, they did not depose the government they succeeded. The Nationalist government, which called itself the Republic of China (ROC), had fled the mainland and taken up residency on the island of Taiwan, where it established a provisional capital in Taipei and continued to claim legitimacy as the rightful Chinese government.[9] In 1969 when Nixon took office, the United States still recognized the ROC. Beijing, however, was adamant that it exercised sovereignty over the island of Taiwan and that the ROC was illegitimate, having been defeated in the civil war. Nixon could not renounce the U.S. commitment to the ROC without reneging on his own affirmation of all U.S. treaty commitments, angering U.S. conservatives who were staunch ROC supporters, unsettling allies, and upsetting the world order by sacrificing a U.S. ally to appease a Communist power. At

[7] Gaddis, 292-293; 295.
[8] Ibid., 276-277.
[9] Spencer C. Tucker et al., *The Encyclopedia of the Cold War*, s.v. "Chinese Civil War (1945-1949)," 274.

the same time, sticking too closely to the ROC risked imperiling normalization with Beijing and the success of détente.

Thus, Nixon's policy on the legitimacy of the ROC and the political status of the Taiwan island was the linchpin of his grand strategy. If his administration could walk the fine line between maintaining long-standing positions on the ROC and initiating a new era in U.S.-PRC relations, then Nixon could implement détente. Ideally, the United States would maintain its commitments to its allies, Beijing would agree to normalize relations with Washington, the administration would create a new global environment that would be favorable to negotiations with the USSR and a smaller U.S. military presence, and the United States would convince the USSR that preserving global stability was in its best interests. What the administration needed to figure out was what combination of policies constituted an adequate balance between the ROC and PRC.[10]

The existing scholarship on Nixon's Taiwan policy does not recognize the importance of U.S.-ROC relations in the wider context of détente. For the most part, historians argue that Nixon and Kissinger threw away the ROC in their quest to open relations with the PRC. Historian and U.S.-China relations scholar Nancy Bernkopf Tucker argues that "Nixon and Kissinger viewed Taiwan as expendable."[11] She argues that Nixon's reassurances to Taipei were meant to appease political conservatives at home and were not a sign of the administration's desire to maintain relations with the ROC; "Nixon and Kissinger rarely reflected on Taiwan at

[10] Political Scientist Michael Chase has written that "in the words of two former Pentagon Asia specialists, 'Washington's official relationship with Beijing on the one hand and its unofficial relationship with Taipei on the other represent perhaps the most complex foreign policy balancing act in the world today.'" (Michael S. Chase, "U.S.-Taiwan Security Cooperation: Enhancing an Unofficial Relationship," in *Dangerous Strait: The U.S.-Taiwan-China Crisis*, ed., Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 162-163.)

[11] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk: United States-Taiwan Relations and the Crisis with China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 68.

all," she claims.[12] In fact, they reflected even less on domestic political reactions to their policies; the president and his administration simply tried to preserve ties with Taipei even as they established ties with Beijing. Another scholar argues "Nixon and Kissinger had to go through the motions of protecting Taipei's interests…to guarantee the success of secret diplomacy."[13] Nixon and Kissinger believed secrecy was critical to connecting with Beijing, but their desire to maintain relations with the ROC was more fundamental than just using Taipei to shield secret diplomacy with Beijing.

Nixon and Kissinger would not have played fast and loose with a U.S. ally while they were trying to maintain U.S. credibility on the world stage.[14] Claiming the administration saw the ROC as expendable is contrary to the record of their actions between Nixon's inauguration in 1969 and his historic visit to mainland China in 1972 and contrary to the maintenance of U.S. treaty commitments as a key tenet of détente. Understanding how the Nixon administration made Taiwan policy is a matter of understanding how they dealt with the internal contradiction in their détente strategy and how they implemented détente on the tactical level.

This thesis argues that Taiwan policymaking involved both process and product. Although Gaddis criticizes Nixon and Kissinger for cutting the State Department out of policymaking to the point that the White House's lack of specific expertise when making policy became detrimental and made détente ineffective beyond relations with the USSR and PRC,[15] the evidence in this thesis demonstrates that the State Department, and the Defense Department, played a significant role in Taiwan policymaking even though final decision-making authority was centralized in the White House. In terms of the product, Nixon and Kissinger consistently

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[12] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk*, 30.
[13] Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes: U.S.-Taiwan Relations Since 1942*, Taiwan in the Modern World (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 114.
[14] Gaddis, 276-277.
[15] Ibid., 332.

sought to balance relations with Beijing and Taipei, and there is little evidence that their motivation for doing so was limited to domestic politics or the necessity of keeping their initiatives toward Beijing a secret. What that balancing act did allow them, however, was the opportunity to open relations with Beijing while not violating the Nixon Doctrine. The problem was that they did not know where the proper balancing point was, and during the first three years of the Nixon presidency, the White House, State Department, and Pentagon worked to find the proper balance.[16]

There were three pivotal moments in U.S.-ROC relations during the first Nixon administration. In 1969, the U.S. Navy ended its patrol of the Taiwan Strait, touching off a chain reaction that set the stage for the 1971-72 breakthrough to Beijing. In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly considered whether the ROC or PRC should represent China in the world body just as Nixon and Kissinger were starting to make progress with Beijing. Finally, in 1972, Nixon visited the mainland and tried to set the United States on a path to normalized relations with the People's Republic of China. This thesis looks at how the Nixon administration made Taiwan policy in each instance by examining the intersection of process and product: what were the options, how did the administration weigh the pros and cons of each, and what policies resulted from that process?

In this thesis, *China* refers to the country occupying a dominant position in Asian geography, bounded by the Soviet Union to the north, Pakistan to the west, India and Indochina to the south, and the Pacific Ocean to the east. In this period, with few exceptions, the country China was understood to include the island of Taiwan. *Taiwan* refers to the geographical entity:

[16] For a similar argument derived from a discourse analysis, see Øystein Tunsjø, *US Taiwan Policy: Constructing the Triangle*, Asian Security Studies (London: Routledge, 2008), 62-63.

the island lying off the coast of China, south of Japan. Taiwan will be used in contrast to *the mainland*, which refers to the portion of China on the Asian continent.

Two different governments claimed to be the legitimate authority over China (i.e. the mainland and Taiwan). The *Republic of China (ROC)* was led by President Chiang Kai-shek, and exercised direct control over the island of Taiwan, where it had sought refuge at the end of the Chinese civil war in the late 1940s, and a few smaller islands. The *People's Republic of China (PRC)* was led by Chairman Mao Zedong and his prime minister Zhou Enlai, and exercised direct control over the mainland portion of China. Those people who identified with the ROC will be referred to as *Nationalists* and those who identified with the PRC as *Communists*, since those are the political and governmental systems to which they ascribed.

China policy refers comprehensively to the U.S. government's policies and general balancing act with the PRC and ROC: collectively, China. *Taiwan policy* refers to the administration's policies towards the ROC and its island territory. Any other basic terms or acronyms will be introduced and explained as they become relevant to the discussion.

Chapter 1

Follow the Leader: The end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol

In the fall of 1969, the U.S. Navy stopped patrolling the Taiwan Strait. During President Nixon's visit to Beijing more than two years later, People's Republic of China (PRC) Prime Minister Zhou Enlai raised the question of U.S. relations with the Republic of China (ROC). Of course Beijing wanted a peaceful reunion of Taiwan with the mainland, Zhou assured the U.S. president, but what if peaceful reunion was not possible? Of course Beijing would then be justified in invading Taiwan to expel Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government. Zhou reminded Nixon that he had already granted Beijing that right; the president had made that quite clear when the U.S. Navy stopped patrolling the Taiwan Strait.[17]

The Taiwan Strait Patrol's dual role as a symbol of U.S. tensions with the PRC and solidarity with the ROC makes its cancellation an ideal case for examining how the administration managed the impact of détente on the two Chinese governments. The Defense Department cancelled the patrol as part of its effort to implement the Nixon Doctrine. However, the actual decision to stop patrolling the Strait was only part of a larger story. The State Department went on to use the cancellation as a sign of goodwill toward Beijing, but at the same time it assured Taipei that the cancellation did not represent a change in U.S. policy toward the ROC. Thus the Taiwan Strait Patrol also had a dual role as a feature of the Nixon Doctrine and normalization with the PRC, and how the administration handled its cancellation says a great deal about how they handled the contradiction between the Nixon Doctrine's affirmation of treaty commitments and the need to normalize relations with the PRC.

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[17] "Memorandum of Conversation," February 24, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 199.

The progression of events surrounding the end of the patrol was not a thoughtful set of responses to a central problem. Instead, it was the result of accumulating decisions by the Defense Department, national security advisor, and State Department. Each actor took another's decision and used it for his own purpose. Their goals, however, were guided by Nixon's strategic vision of a smaller U.S. military footprint and normalized relations with Beijing. Thus the Defense Department, State Department, and the White House worked toward both goals at once, even though they were contradictory.

The end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol only gets cursory treatment in most accounts of the Nixon administration's China policy, whether in memoirs of the decision-makers who were involved or scholarly examinations of the Nixon foreign policy. Most American decision-makers and scholars mention the cancellation only in passing, but the leadership in Beijing obviously considered it a significant signal. The Taiwan Strait Patrol was situated at the intersection of implementing the Nixon Doctrine, opening relations with Beijing, and preserving relations with Taipei. Thus there were three questions facing the administration: how to implement the Nixon Doctrine, how to credibly signal a new relationship with Beijing, and what to do about the ROC as the administration moved closer to the PRC. Explicating the larger story of the cancellation of the Taiwan Strait Patrol helps us understand how the administration used the patrol to answer all three questions, and reveals how Taiwan policy was larger than just a means to appease Beijing and Congress.

Though the withdrawal of the patrol was conveyed to Beijing in such a way that it implied the administration wanted to ease tensions with the PRC, that is not why the Navy actually canceled it. The decision flowed from Nixon's call for a smaller U.S. military presence around the world and from Congressional pressure to cut military budgets after years of pouring

blood and treasure into Vietnam. The State Department assured Taipei the cancellation was *not* a change in U.S. policy, even as it implied to the PRC that the cancellation of the patrol *was* a change in U.S. policy. The U.S. embassy in Taipei told Chiang's government that the change was merely part of the Navy's larger global drawdown. The Pentagon, in fact, loaned ships and submarines to the ROC Navy so that it could continue policing the Taiwan Strait itself. The end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol was not a product of Nixon's opening to China, but rather a military decision that the White House and State Department used in their efforts to ease tensions with Beijing.

Perhaps the most intriguing thing about the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol, though, is that it challenges the traditional wisdom that Nixon and Kissinger wholly controlled the foreign policy apparatus. In this instance, the two lords of foreign policy took advantage of a policy change decided on and executed by the Department of Defense, rather than pulling strings behind the scenes to control the implementation of their grand design. The story of the end of the patrol involved a surprising degree of cooperation and interaction among the Department of Defense, Department of State, and national security advisor. In regards to China, implementing the details of détente was a decentralized process involving cabinet departments working independently of direct White House control while following the strategic guidance the president provided. From the beginning, at the highest levels of the administration, the goal of implementing détente in China was to strike a balance between relations with Beijing and with Taipei; to maintain U.S. relations with Taiwan while engineering an opening to mainland China.

The History of the Taiwan Strait Patrol

The island of Taiwan became part of the Chinese empire in 1885. Soon after, Japan seized the territory during the Sino-Japanese War and held it until the end of the Second World War. The Republic of China fought with the Allies in WWII, and several Allied agreements promised that Taiwan would be returned to China once Japan was defeated.[18]

The Republic of China was founded in 1911 when the Chinese revolution overthrew the empire's Qing Dynasty, but upon the death of the Republic's first president, the country disintegrated into a period of internecine conflict. Sun Yatsen reunified the Republic of China in 1921, and when he died in 1925 Chiang Kai-shek took power as president. Chiang launched a military campaign against the China's Communists, but eventually allied with them to fight against Japan during the Second World War. In August 1945, the alliance between Chiang's Nationalists and the Communists broke down and a full-scale civil war broke out.[19] The course of the war turned against the government, and in January 1949 Chiang and his followers fled to Taiwan and established a provisional capital in Taipei.[20] In October, communist leader Mao Zedong declared the People's Republic of China with its capital in Beijing.[21]

Only months later the United States went to war on the Korean Peninsula. Concerned that U.S. involvement on the northern end of East Asia might tempt the communist government in Beijing to launch an assault on the island of Taiwan, President Harry Truman ordered the U.S. Navy's Seventh Fleet into the Taiwan Strait. While the ostensible purpose of the Seventh Fleet's presence was to prevent the PRC from attacking Taiwan, scholars like Nancy Bernkopf Tucker

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[18] Spencer C. Tucker et al., *The Encyclopedia of the Cold War: A Political, Social, and Military History*, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara, CA:ABC-CLIO, 2008), s.v. "China, Republic of," 269.
[19] Ibid., 267-269.
[20] Spencer C. Tucker et al., *The Encyclopedia of the Cold War*, s.v. "Chinese Civil War (1945-1949)," 274.
[21] Spencer C. Tucker et al., *The Encyclopedia of the Cold War*, s.v. "China, People's Republic of," 258.

have argued that Truman also wanted to keep the ROC from attacking the mainland.[22] Though Truman considered the interposition a temporary move necessitated by war, the U.S. Navy would continue to return to the Taiwan Strait for the next twenty years.

In 1954, Beijing launched an attack on two islands near the mainland coast that were controlled by the Nationalists after Chiang transferred 73,000 ROC soldiers to the islands, which he claimed were "crucial to the defense of Taiwan."[23] In response, the United States signed a Mutual Defense Treaty with the ROC, committing itself to the defense of Taiwan. A year later Congress passed the Formosa Resolution, which authorized the U.S. president to defend the Nationalist-controlled offshore islands at his discretion. In 1959, when tensions again rose between the mainland and Taiwan, President Eisenhower sent the Seventh Fleet back into the strait to escort ROC ships carrying supplies to the offshore islands.[24] Through the 1960s, the U.S. Navy would continue a regular patrol of the Taiwan Strait, keeping the PRC and ROC forces on their respective sides of this oceanic buffer zone.

In 1960, relations between the PRC and the Soviet Union cooled significantly. Beijing had long criticized Moscow's "de-Stalinization" after the Soviet leader's death, its accommodation of the United States, and perceived Soviet infringement upon PRC sovereignty. Gradually Beijing began loosening its ties with Moscow, moving away from both the Soviet Union and the United States and toward developing countries in Asia and Africa.[25]

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[22] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, "Strategic Ambiguity Or Strategic Clarity?" in *Dangerous Strait: The U.S.-Taiwan-China Crisis*, ed., Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 188.
[23] Julian E. Zelizer, *Arsenal of Democracy: The Politics of National Security – From World War II to the War on Terrorism* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 129.
[24] Øystein Tunsjø, *US Taiwan Policy: Constructing the Triangle*, Asian Security Studies (London: Routledge, 2008), 54.
[25] Spencer C. Tucker et al., *The Encyclopedia of the Cold War*, s.v. "China, People's Republic of," 258-259.

By 1969, the Taiwan Strait Patrol consisted of two Navy destroyers stationed in the area and tasked with regularly cruising the waters between Taiwan and the mainland.[26] Though the destroyers passed through the strait every day or two,[27] the patrol had become more of a symbol than a precaution. Both Nixon's national security advisor, Henry Kissinger, and the Vice Chief of the ROC General Staff admitted separately that the destroyers were of little military value.[28] Yet as Zhou's remarks to Nixon suggest, this symbol played a major role in defining the tense relationship between Beijing, Taipei, and Washington. Then in summer 1969, the Defense Department decided that it would no longer patrol the Taiwan Strait.[29] In retrospect, the change seemed to be a signpost to Nixon's opening to China in 1972.[30] In reality, it was the symbol of something greater. The patrol's cancellation was the result of détente on the tactical level: a series of decisions that came about because of the convergence of Nixon's military and diplomatic strategies.

The Decision to End the Patrol

Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird's biographer suggests that the cancellation of the Taiwan Strait Patrol was "[o]ne of Laird's practical initiatives to further" the Nixon Doctrine.[31] The Nixon Doctrine, sometimes called the Guam Doctrine since Nixon first announced it in Guam, was the president's strategic vision for the role of the U.S. military in Asia. It had three

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[26] Melvin Laird to William P. Rogers, November 29, 1969; DEF 1 CHINAT; Box 1531; Political and Defense; Central Foreign Policy Files, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[27] Amembassy Taipei to SECSTATE WASHDC, Taipei 04835, November 29, 1969; DEF 12 CHINAT 1/1/67; Box 1531; Political and Defense; Central Foreign Policy Files, 1967-1969; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
[28] Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2011), 186-187; Amembassy Taipei to SECSTATE WASHDC, November 29, 1969, General Records of the Department of State.
[29] Melvin Laird to William P. Rogers, November 29, 1969, General Records of the Department of State.
[30] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, "Strategic Ambiguity Or Strategic Clarity?", 192.
[31] Dale Van Atta, *With Honor: Melvin Laird in War, Peace, and Politics* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 222.

parts: first, the United States would maintain its existing treaty commitments; second, the United States would continue to provide a nuclear umbrella for its allies; and third, the United States would expect its allies to take the primary responsibility for their own defense.[32] Part of Nixon's détente grand strategy was a trimming down of U.S. global military commitments. The Nixon Doctrine was a key piece in achieving that drawdown;[33] and the cancellation of the Taiwan Strait Patrol was the manifestation of the Nixon Doctrine on the tactical level.

The withdrawal of the Seventh Fleet's destroyers from the Taiwan Strait was part of a larger program of Naval cutbacks during the same time period.[34] All in all, the Navy would reduce its fleet from 976 ships in 1968 to 495 ships in 1974.[35] However, after the U.S. Navy stopped patrolling the Taiwan Strait, the Pentagon loaned several submarines and ships to the ROC Navy, which began patrolling the strait itself.[36] Thus, the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol was less an example of a withdrawal of U.S. military commitments than of a transfer of responsibility for Taiwan's defense in line with the Nixon Doctrine.

The Nixon Doctrine was also part of the larger politico-military environment in which the Pentagon operated at the end of the Vietnam War. As the war wound down, there was tremendous pressure coming from Congress to cut military spending.[37] Laird accepted that Congress was going to enact military budget cuts, so the administration might as well trim military spending itself to ensure the cuts came in the best places.[38] Thus budget-cutting was one

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[32] Jussi Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 53.
[33] John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 295.
[34] Melvin Laird to William P. Rogers, November 29, 1969, General Records of the Department of State.
[35] Gaddis, 321.
[36] Van Atta, 222.
[37] Zelizer, 221.
[38] Gaddis, 320-321.

of Laird's highest priorities as Defense Secretary.[39] One tactic Laird used was cutting back on conventional forces (like Navy ships) in order to save new programs from the chopping block: programs like the B-1 bomber, the Trident nuclear submarine, and cruise missiles.[40] It is possible that one motivation for ending the Taiwan Strait Patrol was to replace conventional forces, like Navy surface ships, with new high-tech weapons in deterring threats from the PRC. In 1971, Kissinger made several statements arguing that B-52 bombers and submarine-launched missiles could effectively deter any threat from Communist China on their own.[41]

Finally, we cannot ignore the unique position of Secretary Laird when analyzing the decision to cancel the patrols. One reason the cancellation of the Taiwan Strait Patrol was a military decision and not a political one was the unique policymaking independence of the Pentagon thanks to its secretary. The first Congressman to become Secretary of Defense, Laird had been elected to nine terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, and had held prominent positions as the House Republican Conference chairman and a member of the House Appropriations Committee's Defense Subcommittee.[42] During the 1968 presidential election, he was a heavyweight advisor to the Nixon campaign: six of Nixon's first term cabinet secretaries were suggested to him by Laird. Laird became Defense Secretary when Nixon's first choice, Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson (D-WA), declined the offer and a frustrated Nixon appointed Laird instead.[43]

Laird's powerful position in the Nixon White House was somewhat of an accident. When Nixon threatened to name Laird Secretary of Defense since he failed to recruit Jackson, Laird did

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[39] Roger R. Trask and Alfred Goldberg, *The Department of Defense, 1947-1997: Organization and Leaders* (Washington, D.C.: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 1997), 87; Richard A. Hunt, *Melvin Laird and Nixon's Quest for a Post-Vietnam Foreign Policy: 1969-1973*, Special Study, Cold War Foreign Policy Series, ed. Jeffrey A. Larsen and Erin R. Mahan (Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, September 2014), ix.
[40] Trask and Goldberg, 87.
[41] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk*, 62.
[42] Trask and Goldberg, 86.
[43] Van Atta, 131; 136; 3-4.

not want the job. To get out from under Nixon's furious berating, Laird accepted the post, but only under conditions he thought Nixon could never accept. Laird demanded full authority to appoint all his own subordinates, guaranteed in writing. Nixon accepted, wrote his guarantee on a napkin, and signed it.[44] That miscalculation ended up making Laird an administration powerhouse. As Laird's biographer writes, "the Pentagon was…a place apart, ruled solely by Laird." He kept the napkin that was his contract with Nixon. When White House staffers tried to pressure Laird, he would invoke their agreement and even produce the napkin as proof if necessary.[45] That promise, along with his long tenure in Congress and friends on the Hill, made Melvin Laird one of the most powerful men in the Nixon administration.[46] In one instance, he unilaterally cancelled all U.S. military reconnaissance flights after North Korea shot down a U.S. spy plane. Laird kept the pilots grounded despite Kissinger's fury over the decision and Nixon's repeated orders to resume the flights.[47] Laird is also known for decentralizing most policymaking within the Defense Department, especially in giving the services more control over "the development of budgets and force levels."[48]

Laird approved the Navy's proposed slate of cutbacks, but he realized that the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol had major implications for U.S. foreign policy in Asia. Therefore, as he told Kissinger,

> I advised the President…that some of the Navy's proposed reductions, which I had approved, had certain political and military implications. The modification of the Taiwan Strait Patrol was discussed in some detail, including the possibility of a reaction by President Chiang.[49]

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[44] Van Atta, 5.
[45] Ibid., 142.
[46] It is not clear why Nixon accepted Laird's conditions. Some scholars argue that Nixon thought Laird would be largely submissive on matters of policy (Hunt, 2). Laird's biographer seems to suggest that Nixon may have been desperate. Inauguration day was rapidly approaching, and Nixon wanted and needed a strong Secretary of Defense who was popular in Congress in order to effectively manage the war in Vietnam (Van Atta, 3).
[47] Hunt, 6-7.
[48] Trask and Goldberg, 86.
[49] Melvin Laird to William P. Rogers, November 29, 1969, General Records of the Department of State.

Kissinger recognized that President Chiang would not be the only Asian leader who would react to this change. He knew that the People's Republic would be interested in the change as well, and he thought that was to the administration's advantage.

Signaling Beijing

In the late summer and early fall of 1969, Beijing and Moscow were tangled up in a renewed border dispute, which was making Henry Kissinger nervous. When Beijing announced a resumption of negotiations with the Soviets over the issue, Kissinger believed that the PRC had backed down and worried about the balance of power in the communist world. Hurrying to Nixon's office, the national security advisor presented a plan to compile a list of possible actions the administration could use to preempt what he saw as an easing of tensions between the two communist giants. Nixon gave Kissinger the green light, and Kissinger went to find Elliot Richardson, the Assistant Secretary of State, to help him draft the list.[50]

Richardson, the number two at the State Department, was an exception to the Nixon White House's habit of cutting the State Department out of policymaking. A lawyer by training, he had been the Attorney General of Massachusetts, the U.S. Attorney for Massachusetts, and previously served as the Assistant Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare under Eisenhower. One of his first jobs in the Nixon administration was to help the designated national security advisor draft the reorganization of the National Security Council. From that point on, he later remembered, he served as the point man for Kissinger in the State Department. In an oral history interview with the State Department historian, he recalled that the two men "had lunch

[50] Kissinger, 186.

once a week and met regularly in other connections. It was understood from the beginning that…I would attend all NSC meetings whether or not the Secretary was also there."[51]

One of the actions Kissinger and Richardson suggested to the president was to leak word of the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol to the PRC. Their plan was to send a message to Beijing via Pakistani president Yahya Khan. Nixon approved the leak in mid-October 1969.[52]

In late November the State Department suggested to Kissinger that the Hong Kong consulate also leak the change to PRC officials.[53] The Hong Kong leak was the first step in prodding the Communists to resume the Warsaw Talks. The Hong Kong leak would validate a "formal pitch" of the end of the patrols in Warsaw, which would serve as the real carrot extended to the PRC ambassador.[54]

NSC staffer John Holdridge wrote Kissinger that the plan to leak the end of the patrol was an attempt to make "political capital out of a decision taken on budgetary grounds,"[55] which highlights that the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol involved a dispersed policymaking process. The Taiwan Strait Patrol policymaking process is best described as *dispersed* because it was characterized by departmental independence without a common goal uniting military and diplomatic policy; calling the process *decentralized* would imply the administration had a common goal and each department was given wide berth in working toward that goal. The Defense and State Departments were working toward different goals in fall 1969, however. Richardson and Kissinger were sending out feelers to Beijing, but the U.S. Navy was not thinking about easing relations with Beijing when it decided to recall its destroyers from the

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[51] Ambassador Elliot Richardson, interview by Alan James, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training: Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, May 30, 1996, 3-4.
[52] Kissinger, 186-187.
[53] Ibid., 187.
[54] "John H. Holdridge to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)," November 21, 1969, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 48.
[55] Ibid.

Taiwan Strait. The decision to end the patrol was a budgetary matter, though it was guided by military strategy made in the White House. Using the change as diplomatic capital was the result of cooperation between the national security advisor and assistant secretary of state. The role the cancellation played in restarting the Warsaw talks is an example of one Cabinet department seizing on the policy change in another department and strategizing how to use it to the United States' advantage in a new context. This image of independent and cooperating institutions is not a typical portrayal of the Nixon administration, but the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol was the result of just such a process.

The Balancing Act

Before the administration tried to convince the PRC that the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol signaled a change in U.S. China policy, the State Department had reassured the ROC that the end of the patrol had no significance for U.S.-ROC relations. Washington instructed its embassy in Taipei to play up the budgetary concerns facing the U.S. Navy and point out that naval operations were being altered across the globe. The guidance also suggested reaffirming the U.S. defense commitment to the ROC in order to "allay [ROC] concern for its security interests as a result of this change."[56] The administration was telling Taipei that U.S. intentions to defend the ROC remained unchanged; unfortunately domestic factors outside the administration's control forced them to pursue those intentions in a way that, at first glance, might make it seem as if the United States' defense commitment was insincere.

In the diplomatic sphere, the cancellation of the Taiwan Strait Patrol symbolizes the inherent tension between signaling a new era in U.S.-PRC relations and maintaining existing

[56] "Department of State to the Embassy in the Republic of China and Commander, U.S. Taiwan Defense Command," September 23, 1969, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 34.

treaty commitments toward the ROC. That tension was the key problem facing the Nixon administration as they moved to open relations with Beijing. In 1969, the State Department approached that problem by trying to balance its initiatives toward Beijing with its relations with Taipei. On the one hand, the Department hinted to Beijing that the change was a sign of things to come; on the other hand, the Department reassured Taipei that the change was simply one cut in a broader system of Naval cutbacks that had no specific significance for U.S.-ROC relations. In this instance, when faced with an internal contradiction in the détente strategy, the State Department and the White House tried to have it both ways: the U.S. would remake relations with the PRC while maintaining the status quo with the ROC.

It is interesting to note that Richardson, the assistant secretary of state, signed the telegram issuing the guidance to the embassy in Taipei, and not someone at the East Asia desk. The reassurance came from the very top of the State Department hierarchy, and from a man who had a significant hand in using the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol to signal Beijing. The same people who were probing about for a new relationship with the PRC were reassuring Taipei that U.S. Taiwan policy was not changing. Thus, the balancing act between the PRC and ROC was not the result of bureaucratic inertia, of the ROC desk at the State Department managing relations with Taipei while other groups in the administration moved to open relations with Beijing. The same people who were working to signal a new era in U.S.-PRC relations were working to preserve U.S.-ROC relations.

The other interesting point to note about Richardson's signature on the guidance telegram is that it signifies that the State Department played a key role in managing this balancing act. Nixon and Kissinger were not the only ones involved in making U.S. China policy. Richardson's relationship with Kissinger, the State Department's suggestion that the cancellation of the

Taiwan Strait Patrol could be used to restart the Warsaw Talks, and the Department's simultaneous reassurances to Taipei that the cancellation was not a change in U.S.-ROC relations demonstrate that the State Department understood Nixon's strategic goals and played a part in working with the White House to move toward those goals.

Conclusion

In terms of the policy product, the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol was less a move toward Beijing than it was the result of the convergence of three administration goals: paring down the U.S. global military footprint, signaling a new era of relations with the PRC, and preserving relations with the ROC. The Pentagon's decision to end the patrol precipitated several actions on the part of the administration. The first was reassuring Taipei of the U.S. commitment to defend Taiwan, a reassurance which originated at the very top of the State Department. The second was loaning ships and submarines to the ROC Navy so it could maintain a regular patrol of the Taiwan Strait. The third was implying to the PRC that the end of the patrol represented a desire to ease tensions with the government in Beijing. Because the ROC and PRC governments were so closely connected in the international arena, the actions the Nixon administration took impacted U.S. relations with both. As we can see from the fact that the administration was telling the ROC the end of the patrol was *not* a change in overall China policy and telling the PRC the end of the patrol *was* a change in overall China policy, relations with Taipei and Beijing could be mutually exclusive. That tension, and Nixon's desire to keep relations with both governments regardless, would characterize U.S.-ROC relations during the first Nixon administration.

In terms of the policymaking process, the cancellation of the Taiwan Strait Patrol was the result of the dispersed foreign policymaking process that was guided by the détente strategy and

that characterized the early Nixon administration. The U.S. Navy decided in summer 1969 to recall the two destroyers, not under specific instruction from the White House or the Secretary of Defense but guided by the Nixon Doctrine, which called for a smaller U.S. global military footprint. The State Department decided to use the cancellation as diplomatic capital by conveying the information to Beijing as a sign of goodwill. The State Department leadership made sure to balance that initiative toward Beijing, however, by reassuring Taipei that the cancellation had no significance for U.S.-ROC relations. Thus, the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol indicates that Taiwan policy in the early Nixon administration was driven not by the desire for normalization of relations with Beijing, but by Nixon's broader grand strategy, of which the ROC and the PRC were two distinct but related pieces. The administration tried to maintain the status quo in relations with Taipei even as it made conciliatory gestures towards Beijing.

In the narrative of U.S. relations with Taipei, the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol's most significant contribution is in illustrating how détente played out on the tactical level. Détente was not supposed to represent a major change in U.S. policy toward the ROC. In regards to the Nixon Doctrine, Washington's call for allies to take on more responsibility for their own defense was somewhat mediated by the fact that the Pentagon provided the equipment for the ROC to do so. Thus the Defense Department retained a military connection to the ROC, even though it technically drew down the Navy's commitments. In combination with Kissinger's comments about B-52s and submarine-launched missiles deterring the PRC, the continued military connection indicates that the transfer of responsibility for the ROC's defense did not mean a decline in Washington's interest in the ROC's defense.

On the diplomatic side, détente was intended to change U.S. relations with the PRC, but not with the ROC. The end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol was supposed to be significant to Beijing

but not to Taipei. For the ROC, the end of the patrol was supposed to be less a matter of whether the U.S. was committed to the defense of Taiwan and more a matter of how it would defend the island. Washington instructed its ambassador in Taipei to tell the ROC government that the U.S. defense commitment remained unchanged; domestic budget constraints, however, forced the administration to draw down its military presence in the Taiwan Strait. Though that draw down might look ominous to the ROC, the U.S. ambassador was instructed to inform Taipei that it was not.

In Beijing two years later, Nixon would use that same logic to convince PRC prime minister Zhou Enlai that he was serious about normalizing relations with Beijing even though he would not cut off ties with Taipei. Nixon told Zhou that domestic politics made it impossible for him to distance himself from the ROC, but the president assured the prime minister that, between them, he was committed to closer ties with Beijing.[57]

The end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol also represents the intersection of the various personalities and institutions that came together to make foreign policy. The level of coordination among the Department of Defense, the White House, and the State Department is surprising when we expect to find Nixon and Kissinger dominating foreign policymaking with an iron grip. The end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol was the product of different people with different motivations making decisions within their own jurisdictions, and of their relationships and interactions with one another. Thus, the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol was not part of Nixon's bigger plan for opening relations with Beijing. In fact, the U.S. Navy cancelled the patrol with Laird's approval well before Kissinger and Richardson began signaling a change in U.S. policy toward Beijing. So while the cancellation of the Taiwan Strait Patrol is an episode in

[57] "Memorandum of Conversation," February 22, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 196.

the larger narrative of the opening to mainland China, it was not driven by Nixon's desire to normalize relations with the PRC.

The story of what the State Department did with the decision to stop patrolling the Taiwan Strait also shows that the Nixon administration was not hell-bent on normalizing relations with the PRC at the expense of relations with the ROC. In fact, both the State and Defense Departments made efforts to balance their actions in regards to Taipei. When the State Department sent out feelers to Beijing, it also reassured Taipei of the United States' continuing commitment to defend their island. When the Pentagon withdrew its destroyers from the strait, it also lent ships and submarines to the ROC Navy so the ROC could continue monitoring its neighbor.

The Nixon administration was not actively trying to disengage from the ROC nor was it de facto doing so through negligence. In fact, both the State Department and the Defense Department were taking deliberate steps to maintain the status quo in U.S. relations with Taipei. The end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol was not a major change in U.S. China policy, but the Nixon administration would continue trying to balance relations with Taipei and Beijing even when the needs of those two relationships were mutually exclusive. The first major test of the administration's ability to keep this balance came at the United Nations on the evening of October 25, 1971, when the General Assembly voted on whether Beijing or Taipei represented China.

Chapter 2

Re-Losing China: The 1971 United Nations Vote on Chinese Representation

U Thant was crying. From his place on the floor of the United Nations General Assembly, U.S. Ambassador George H.W. Bush thought he could see tears welling up in the UN Secretary General's eyes as he watched what Bush later called the "gladiatorial ugliness" unfolding in the chamber. Entire delegations were dancing for joy in the aisles. Mounting the podium "to speak on a procedural motion," Bush drew a cacophony of hisses from the permanent representatives of the world's sovereign nations.[58] The Republic of China's Foreign Minister took to the podium. "In view of [the] frenzy and irrational behavior in this hall," he said, "[the delegation] of China has decided not to take part in any further proceedings of this Assembly."[59] With that he walked out. Bush watched helplessly as the delegation of the Republic of China walked through the chaos of the Assembly chamber and left the United Nations.

On the evening of October 25, 1971 Richard Nixon re-lost China when the UN General Assembly voted to take China's UN seat from the Republic of China (ROC) and give it to the People's Republic (PRC). The domestic political backlash was severe; Congress seriously considered reducing U.S. funds for the international body in retaliation.[60] Yet U.S. outrage petered out rather quickly, and Nixon never faced the criticism that Harry Truman had weathered when he first lost China after the Communists defeated the Nationalists in their civil war, even though Nixon arguably did far more in 1971 to strengthen the Communists' position in China than Truman ever did. Just months before, Nixon had announced that he would visit the People's

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[58] George H.W. Bush, *All the Best, George Bush: My Life in Letters and Other Writings* (New York: Scribner, 2013, 153-154.

[59] "Telegram From the Mission to the United Nations to the Department of State," October 26, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 430.

[60] Robert Keatley, "Rogers Calmly Accepts UN Loss on China, But Congress Talks of Retaliatory Action," *The Wall Street Journal*, October 27, 1971, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, ttp://search.proquest.com/docview/133553939?accountid=34685.

Republic to discuss normalization of relations with Beijing; then in October the UN voted to seat Beijing in China's seat, effectively recognizing the Communist government as the legitimate government of China. Why did Nixon move away from the ROC and toward the PRC with apparent impunity?

That question has not been sufficiently addressed because foreign policy scholars have paid so little attention to the 1971 UN vote to expel the ROC and seat the PRC instead. Even Richard Nixon devoted 39 pages of his memoirs to the 1971 efforts to ease relations with Beijing and only four paragraphs to the UN vote.[61] Historians tend to skim over the event in the same cursory manner. Most scholars only refer to the vote as a signpost indicating the closing of serious relations with Taipei and the opening of a new relationship with Beijing. Too often, that cursory treatment oversimplifies the problem that Nixon faced in 1971.

The most common impression that the existing scholarship leaves is that Nixon and Kissinger were merely going "through the motions of protecting Taipei's interests, if only to guarantee the success of secret diplomacy" with Beijing.[62] This picture of an apathetic administration obligated by tradition or public opinion to pursue a course of action it found unnecessary is not accurate; Nixon and Kissinger were hardly going through the motions when defending Taipei's UN seat.[63] Instead, the 1971 Chinese representation vote was another example of the administration's efforts to implement détente by balancing relations with Beijing and Taipei.

That balancing act came to the forefront when the General Assembly considered whether the Republic or the People's Republic was entitled to represent the UN member known as China.

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[61] Richard Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978), 544-583.
[62] Richard Bush, *At Cross Purposes: U.S.-Taiwan Relations Since 1942*, Taiwan in the Modern World (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 114 and 117.
[63] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk: United States-Taiwan Relations and the Crisis with China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 30.

The problem facing the administration was how its desire to have a relationship with both governments would work in the United Nations. One country could not be represented twice, but both the PRC and the ROC denied that they were the governments of two separate countries.[64] In 1971, the administration set out to craft a strategy for the October vote that would effectively solve the question of which Chinese government should sit in the UN. The United States and the ROC could not use their Security Council vetoes to decide the matter because this was a question about a country's representation in the UN.[65] China was already a UN member, and the General Assembly was voting on which government should occupy its seat, so the United States and the ROC needed to compile a coalition of nations that would vote to keep Taipei in the UN.

The problem of Chinese representation was not new. In 1961, the United States and several cosponsors had proposed a resolution that made a change in Chinese UN representation an Important Question, a UN procedure that required a resolution to receive a two-thirds supermajority of the General Assembly to pass. In 1962, the Soviet Union sponsored a resolution that called for the China seat to be taken from Taipei and given to Beijing. That resolution failed to achieve the necessary support from two-thirds of the General Assembly. Similar resolutions sponsored by Albania in 1963 and 1969 were also met with Important Question resolutions and also failed to achieve two-thirds support.[66] Ominously for the United States, each time a vote on Chinese representation was held fewer countries voted for the Important Question and more countries voted to admit Beijing. The Nixon administration faced its first Chinese representation vote in 1969, when the Albanian Resolution received a simple majority for the first time. The

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[64] Henry Kissinger, *White House Years* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2011), 719.
[65] "Memorandum From Marshall Wright of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)," March 3, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 333.
[66] "Editorial Note," *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 278.

day before the 1969 vote took place, Kissinger requested two policy studies: one on long-term policy toward Beijing and the other on policy toward the China seat in the UN.[67] Around the same time, communication with Beijing began in earnest through backchannels with Pakistan and Romania.[68]

By January 1971, the State Department was convinced it could no longer garner enough support to pass an Important Question resolution. This meant the Albanian Resolution on the China seat would pass with the simple majority it had already received.[69] All spring, the State Department scrambled to find the most viable strategies for saving Taipei's place in the UN. Over the summer, Nixon weighed his options for the UN vote against the then-uncertain prospects for his overtures toward Beijing. Once Kissinger returned from Beijing in July and Beijing had agreed to a presidential visit, Nixon told the State Department to support PRC entry to the UN and introduce a resolution making Taipei's expulsion an Important Question requiring a two-thirds super-majority. In September and October, Ambassador Bush, U.S. ambassadors around the world, and President Nixon all worked to build support to keep the ROC in the UN. On the evening of the vote, however, an unexpected wave of last-minute defections destroyed their efforts, and the ROC delegation walked out of the General Assembly for the last time.

The strategy the United States used to try to defend the ROC in the UN in 1971 was the result of a complex policymaking process inside the White House and the State Department, and of a complex balancing act between opening relations with the PRC and maintaining relations with Taipei. Just as the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol involved a surprising degree cooperation between the Departments of Defense and State and the White House, the State Department and

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[67] Kissinger, 700.
[68] Ibid., 704.
[69] "Response to National Security Study Memorandum 107," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 326.

the White House worked together to build a winning strategy for the UN. The State Department essentially acted as the policymaking body in this instance, and the White House worked with the strategies that the State Department offered.

This dynamic put the president in the position of the balancer. His détente grand strategy committed him to remake relations with the PRC and to preserve relations with the ROC. When the administration cancelled the Taiwan Strait Patrol in 1969, that balance had been manageable because maintaining it merely required sending different signals to Beijing and Taipei. In the UN, however, the administration could not just send different signals; it had to craft a coherent policy to sell to the international community.

In 1971, Nixon was extending a hand toward Beijing in hopes of normalizing relations while simultaneously trying to keep Beijing from taking Taipei's UN seat. Taipei's representation in the UN was based on its claim to be the rightful government of China, whose seat it occupied. Normalizing relations with Beijing while saying Taipei was the legitimate government of China would be awkward; defending Taipei's hold on the China seat while saying it was not the government of China would be ridiculous. Over the summer of 1971, Nixon struggled to find a strategy for the UN vote that allowed him to normalize relations with Beijing and keep Taipei in the UN. Thus, the preparations for the 1971 UN vote were fundamentally a matter of managing the internal contradiction in détente: that Nixon would open relations with the People's Republic of China and preserve existing U.S. bilateral relationships, including the relationship with Beijing's rival government.

The Problem

In January 1971 the consensus inside the State Department was that there were four ways to defend Taipei's UN membership. First, the United States could continue to maintain its current strategy. Second, it could adopt the principle of "universality," that all legitimate governments should be represented in the UN. Third, it could adopt universality and introduce a dual representation resolution that would seat both Beijing and Taipei. Finally, it could introduce a dual representation resolution alone.[70]

Sticking with the existing strategy of declaring a change in Chinese representation an Important Question would be risky. The State Department predicted that within a year or two, the United States would no longer have the support to pass such a resolution. Maintaining the current strategy was an option, but it probably would not succeed.[71]

Invoking universality would allow the United States to argue that both Beijing and Taipei should sit in the UN, but it would also have implications beyond just the Chinese representation question. According to the principle of universality, all legitimate governments should be represented in the UN; it was primarily directed at the so-called "divided countries" which had competing communist and non-communist governments. In the 1970s, China, Korea, Vietnam, and Germany were all divided countries. North Korea, North Vietnam, and East Germany were not UN members; if the administration used universality to call for Beijing's entry to the UN, it might end up committing the United States to support these other communist governments' entry at a later date. Only in the case of China and Germany, however, were both governments seeking

[70] "Response to National Security Study Memorandum 107," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, Document 326.
[71] Ibid.

UN seats, and West Germany had indicated that it would be amenable to seeing East Germany seated in the organization.[72]

Just adopting universality would be a passive defense against the section of the Albanian Resolution that would oust Taipei, but the administration could take the initiative and also adopt a dual representation resolution as an alternative to the Albanian option. Dual representation would allow both Beijing and Taipei to have seats in the UN. Such an arrangement would effectively split the China seat into two seats, which both Beijing and Taipei opposed. Both governments argued that there was only one China. They would not support any policy that appeared to imply that Taiwan was a separate political entity from the mainland, and thus that Beijing and Taipei were equally legitimate governments of two different countries. This was the so-called one-China or two-China problem. In this instance, however, the administration could avoid accusations of having a two-China policy by invoking universality—both Beijing and Taipei should be represented in the UN because they were both governments, not because they represented two different countries.[73]

The State Department's final option was to introduce dual representation without universality, but doing so would expose the administration to charges of having a two-China policy. Avoiding universality would avoid unnecessary implications for other divided governments, and dual representation might be more popular than the Albanian Resolution that would expel Taipei. Justifying dual representation without universality and without saying that Taiwan and the mainland were different countries would be difficult, however. Beijing and

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[72] "Response to National Security Study Memorandum 107," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, Document 326; "Memorandum From Marshall Wright of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)," March 3, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, Document 333.
[73] Ibid.

Taipei could both attack dual representation as a de facto two-China policy.[74] Each option the State Department presented had attractive advantages and forbidding disadvantages that the administration had to weigh.

As the debates within the administration progressed, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Marshall Green proposed a fifth option: the United States could introduce a dual representation resolution and another resolution declaring just the expulsion of Taipei an important question.[75] Under this formula, voting Beijing into the UN would be relatively easy while voting Taipei out would be difficult.[76] This plan assumed that what other countries really wanted was Beijing in the UN and not necessarily Taipei out of the UN. This is the option that Nixon finally approved.

Early on, however, the most popular option among staff at the State Department and the National Security Council was a dual representation resolution supported by universality, since it would seat Beijing while avoiding the need to explain why China should be allowed two UN seats. NSC staffer Marshall Wright argued that ROC membership was "in our interest," and that dual representation was the best way to keep Taipei in the UN. He also believed that universality was the best justification because "it finesses the whole unanswerable question of one China, or two Chinas, or one China-two governments, etc." Wright was cautious, however, and suggested

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[74] "Response to National Security Study Memorandum 107," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, Document 326; "Memorandum From Marshall Wright of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)," March 3, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, Document 333.

[75] "Minutes of the Senior Review Group Meeting," March 9, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 335.

[76] "Meeting Among President Nixon, Secretary of State Rogers, and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)," May 27, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 358.

to Kissinger that the administration hold off on deciding whether to use universality until they were confident that other countries would support that logic.[77]

Assistant Secretary Green agreed with Wright that dual representation and universality was the best option, but he also thought the administration should make Taipei's ouster an important question. At a National Security Council Senior Review Group meeting in March, Green and Wright sparred over the matter of the Important Question resolution. Wright thought it would "appear to be a gimmick." The question of whether or not a new strategy would appear to be a "gimmick" was a recurring one in the early stages of the policymaking process. The logic was that there were two options for the 1971 vote: to present a proposal that would solve the Chinese representation issue once and for all, or to introduce a proposal that would only put the problem off. The consensus was that only an option the world community thought could reasonably solve the problem would earn enough votes to pass.[78]

Kissinger believed that the primary goal of any U.S. strategy should be to win. "I am pretty much persuaded that if the President decides to try dual representation, we should pick the formula that has the best chance of getting votes," he told the Senior Review Group. "Otherwise, we will be opening the way for the Albanian Resolution." And, as he had mentioned at the start of the meeting, "the President would react very badly if the end result of this exercise is the passage of the Albanian Resolution, the seating of Communist China, and the expulsion of Taiwan."[79]

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[77] "Memorandum From Marshall Wright of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)," March 3, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, Document 333.
[78] "Minutes of the Senior Review Group Meeting," March 9, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, Document 335.
[79] Ibid.

Weighing Options

Before the National Security Council met on March 25, 1971 to discuss the administration's strategy for the Chinese representation vote, Kissinger explained to Nixon that the UN vote would be a delicate balancing act with potentially serious consequences. The vote had implications for "U.S. international prestige, the attitude of the American public toward the UN, and our future relations with both Taipei and [Beijing]."[80] In effect, the administration needed a policy that was acceptable to public opinion, Beijing, and Taipei. Should the United States lose the vote, U.S. prestige in the international arena could be seriously damaged.

The State Department and Kissinger's NSC staff revised the options based on which arguments would garner the most support and concluded that dual representation had the best chance of success. Ambassador Bush reported to the State Department that he did not believe universality would make a plan combining an Important Question resolution with a dual representation resolution more popular,[81] and that making the Albanian Resolution an Important Question was no longer feasible. The only Important Question resolution that could garner majority support would be one that made "the expulsion of a member state" in general an Important Question.[82] In Washington, Kissinger presented Nixon with three options. First, they could continue with the same approach, but the State Department was convinced the old Important Question resolution was doomed, and sticking with a losing strategy would raise questions about why the administration would want to lose. Second, the United States could

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[80] "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 341.
[81] "Telegram From the Mission to the United Nations to the Department of State," March 13, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 338.
[82] "Telegram From the Mission to the United Nations to the Department of State," March 23, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 340.

introduce a dual representation resolution by itself, or third, dual representation supported by universality. A dual representation resolution, he pointed out, could come in a variety of forms ("'one China-one Taiwan', 'one China-two states', 'two China's', etc.") but both the PRC and the ROC would reject any resolution that implied dividing China in two; any dual representation plan had to avoid any mention of either government's claim to legitimacy.[83]

Yet Kissinger was still not sure about whether to use an Important Question resolution with dual representation. The advantage was that the Important Question required a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly to agree to any change in China's UN representation. Without such a safeguard, "a simple majority can vote [Beijing] in and Taipei out," which had already happened in 1969. The disadvantage, however, was that there was no indication two-thirds of UN members supported dual representation, so it would be imprudent to make a dual representation resolution an Important Question. Universality was extraneous, and thus Kissinger recommended avoiding it. There was no use in taking a stance that could impact relations with Germany, Korea, and Vietnam if it would not make a difference on the China question. [84]

Then Kissinger introduced another complication: which government should sit on the UN Security Council if both governments sat in the General Assembly? The State Department thought the Security Council seat should go to the PRC. Kissinger thought that giving the seat to the PRC might be necessary, but "we can let that development be forced upon us rather than voluntarily taking a position which is anathema to our Taiwan ally." Kissinger wrote Nixon that "State believes this should be treated strictly as a tactical issue and we should take no position

[83] "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, Document 341.
[84] Ibid.

until we have consulted with our allies. My own view is that it goes to the heart of our relations with Taiwan…."[85]

Kissinger's reluctance and the State Department's willingness to give the Security Council seat to the PRC challenges the traditional narrative that Nixon and Kissinger wanted closer ties with Beijing and the State Department wanted to preserve ties with Taipei. Kissinger took the implications of the vote far more seriously than the State Department did, or at least he claimed to around Nixon. Historian and U.S.-China relations scholar Nancy Bernkopf Tucker argues that Nixon and Kissinger rushed to open relations with Beijing and left Taipei in the dust.[86] But they were not rushing to Beijing if they did not want to sacrifice the ROC's UN Security Council seat, and the State Department had to push them to do so.

When the National Security Council met on the morning of March 25, Secretary of State William Rogers and President Nixon were concerned with whether to justify dual representation using universality. Rogers said it was certain the administration would lose a vote on the traditional Important Question resolution, but rationalizing a new policy would require political finesse. The administration could say it was responding to changing realities; or it could claim universality and accept the implications for other divided countries. Nixon argued that recent polls indicated the American people were adamantly against Beijing entering the UN. "If we change our policy, we will get glowing editorials from the *New York Times*, *Time* Magazine, etc. but we will get a hell of a kick from the people," he said. The U.S. could not reasonably say, "we have seen the light, and Communist China ought to be in the UN." The administration had to defend Taipei's UN seat; the real question was whether to use universality as justification. Nixon

[85] "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, Document 341.
[86] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk*, 30.

admitted that it would set a precedent for the other divided states, but he thought any challenges there would be manageable.[87]

Vice President Spiro Agnew, however, thought that the best course of action would be to let Taipei be voted out of the UN. Which government sat in the China seat was not a serious strategic interest for the United States. Agnew thought the administration should stick with the old policy and intentionally lose to show stalwart support for Taipei and avoid legitimizing the caustic political rhetoric Beijing would undoubtedly bring to the UN. On that note Nixon closed the meeting, saying he would think more about it during the weekend.[88]

After the National Security Council meeting, Kissinger recommended to Nixon that the administration introduce a dual representation resolution supported by the principle of universality, and make the expulsion of Taipei an Important Question. He narrowed the reasonable policy options to two: keeping the Important Question resolution or adopting a new policy, which Kissinger described as "the Vice President's preference," and "State's preference," respectively. Kissinger believed that dual representation, universality, and Taiwan's expulsion as an important question was the only strategy that seemed capable of solving the Chinese representation question and garnering enough international support to pass. The national security advisor recommended consulting with Taipei before making a final decision, since this issue was ultimately about the ROC. He recommended that Nixon send a personal emissary to Taiwan to consult with Chiang Kai-shek, hold off on any final decision until that emissary returned, and tell

[87] "Minutes of Meeting of National Security Council," March 25, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 342.
[88] Ibid.

the State Department to make no statements on the issue until the president reached a decision. Nixon approved all three options and dispatched Ambassador Bob Murphy to Taiwan.[89]

Making the Final Call

By the time Murphy returned from Taipei in May, Nixon was considering allowing the ROC to be kicked out of the UN. Murphy reported that Chiang would support Beijing entering the UN as long as Taipei remained in the Security Council; Nixon told him that "would be impractical." On the other hand, the president suggested, if the United States were to go down fighting for the ROC using the traditional Important Question strategy, responsibility for Taipei's ouster would lie with the UN and the administration "might better be able to limit the damage to our relations with Taiwan."[90]

Kissinger agreed that there was no way Taipei could stay on the Security Council, but he disagreed that allowing Taipei to be expelled would be a good option. The administration could not defend Taipei's Security Council seat because it could not use its veto and there was not enough international support to win a vote. Kissinger thought the U.S. was left with two options: propose dual representation knowing that the PRC would get the Security Council seat, or stay the course and realize that the United States would lose. Kissinger believed Chiang would never relinquish his Security Council seat, but protecting it would make the administration look like it was not serious about bringing in the PRC. If the United States used the traditional Important Question again, Taipei would be expelled and the administration would face severe backlash, but

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[89] "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," April 9, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 344.

[90] "Memorandum for the President's File by the President's Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)," May 21, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 354.

the administration would have stood by an ally and Beijing would not be surprised. Kissinger recommended that Nixon tell Chiang the PRC had to have the Security Council seat.[91]

Nixon was unsure of how to proceed, and the problem was U.S. public opinion. In a discussion with the president, Kissinger noted that omitting universality and saying "Communist China in by majority vote; Taiwan expelled only by a two-thirds vote" was a good option, because it avoided "a general principle." Nixon wanted to know what the domestic reaction would be before making a final decision. If the United States went down fighting for Taipei, the administration would be praised for standing by an ally and criticized for losing the vote. If the United States allowed Beijing in, the administration *might* be praised if Taipei stayed and *would* be criticized for letting in Beijing.[92]

When Nixon met with Walter McConaughy, the U.S. ambassador to the ROC, he was again leaning toward allowing Taipei to be ousted. Nixon assured him that the U.S. supported the ROC in the UN, but said salvaging the Security Council seat was unlikely. McConaughy replied that the Security Council seat was the biggest problem. In his estimation, the administration could keep Taipei in the Security Council by not explicitly giving the seat to the PRC; should Taipei lose that seat, it would likely walk out of the UN altogether. Nixon interjected: "if I were in their position, and the UN…moves in that direction, I would just say the hell with the UN…. It's a damn debating society. What good does it do?" McConaughy managed to convince the president that the UN was a very important symbol for the ROC. The ambassador pointed out that Taipei saw a particular "psychological importance" to the UN. "They don't want to be isolated," he argued, and they worried that other countries would cut bilateral ties with them if

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[91] "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," May 26, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 356.

[92] "Meeting Among President Nixon, Secretary of State Rogers, and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)," May 27, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, Document 358.

they were not a UN member. Nixon became less belligerent, and by the end of the meeting he was nearly convinced by McConaughy's argument.[93]

By early July, the State Department was pessimistic about the United States' chances for winning the vote. In the early spring, the department had predicted that a dual representation resolution would pass easily if the administration began lobbying then, cosponsored the resolution, and gave the PRC the Security Council seat. "In part due to our delay," Rogers wrote Nixon, "the situation has changed over time." A "bandwagon psychology" had set in as Beijing opened "relations with seven countries in the last six months." The U.S.'s overtures to the PRC over the same time period, Rogers argued, had also "led many countries to assume that we are emphasizing our bilateral relations with the PRC and deemphasizing" the importance of the UN vote. If the U.S. were to cosponsor a dual representation resolution and begin building support for it immediately, Rogers thought they might win by five to seven votes. If the U.S. did not cosponsor the resolution and the Security Council seat stayed with Taipei, the resolution would fail by as wide a margin as twenty votes. Of course, all estimates were only tentative, Rogers impressed upon the president.[94]

One of the most criticized aspects of the UN vote is Nixon's delay in making a decision. At the NSC meeting in March, the State Department had requested a decision within 2 weeks. Rogers had been pressing Nixon for a decision, but the president was obviously stalling. The delay was not worrying only the State Department. NSC staffer Marshall Wright wrote Kissinger that he was concerned that the administration was "literally going to lose this by default." He

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[93] "Conversation Between President Nixon and the Ambassador to the Republic of China (McConaughy)," June 30, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 136.

[94] "Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon," July 3, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 369.

asked the national security advisor if he should draft a decision memo for Nixon or if he ought to relax. Kissinger told him to relax.[95]

The cursory treatment most scholars give the UN vote leaves the wrong impression about Nixon's intentions behind the delay. Many historians argue the president intentionally abandoned Taipei to ingratiate himself with Beijing.[96] In fact he was thinking hard about how to balance defending Taipei's UN seat against rapidly accelerating progress with Beijing.

Nixon had been gesturing towards a change in U.S. China policy since his inaugural address in January 1969.[97] In the fall of 1969, the State Department had leaked the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol to Beijing as a signal of the administration's desire to ease tensions with the PRC. In the spring of 1970 the State Department took further steps to relax tensions, moving to normalize trade and travel between the United States and PRC. The president feared for the future of his initiatives in May 1970 when Beijing called off the backchannel Warsaw talks after the U.S. bombings in Cambodia, but later that year Washington and Beijing set up new backchannels through the presidents of Pakistan and Romania.[98]

One of the most famous breakthroughs in Nixon's China policy came when Beijing invited a U.S. Ping-Pong team to compete in the PRC. A more serious breakthrough came when PRC prime minister Zhou Enlai sent word to Nixon via the Pakistani president that the PRC would welcome "a special envoy of the President" to discuss further normalization. That message prompted Kissinger's secret trip to Beijing in July 1971 and the PRC's historic

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[95] "Memorandum From Marshall Wright of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)," June 24, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 367.
[96] Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes*, 117.
[97] Nixon, *RN*, 545.
[98] Ibid., 545-546.

invitation to Nixon to visit the mainland.[99] Thus the decision about how to defend Taipei's UN membership and the breakthrough in negotiations with Beijing overlapped. In the spring and early summer of 1971, Nixon was trying to convince Beijing to take the first step towards normal relations while trying not to offend them by sticking too closely to Taipei in the UN.

Nixon was caught between his desire to save Taipei's UN seat and the need to act gently around the PRC lest they suddenly reject Nixon's overtures. The president was not *delaying*, per se; he was cautiously weighing his options. He needed to see if Beijing would agree to a high-level emissary visit. For that, he needed to play down U.S. efforts to fight for Taipei in the UN. In the interval, though, Nixon was thinking hard about how to best maintain bilateral U.S.-ROC relations. He considered going down fighting over the traditional Important Question resolution to signal the strength of his administration's commitment to the ROC. Ambassador McConaughy finally convinced Nixon against that course of action. Keeping the ROC in the UN was an important symbol. After his conversation with McConaughy, Nixon no longer discussed allowing Taipei to be ousted.

Emphasize Political, Not Legal, Arguments

Once Kissinger returned from Beijing and Nixon announced an upcoming presidential visit to the PRC, Nixon dove back into the efforts to save Taipei's UN seat. At the end of July he met with Rogers and Kissinger to give his final decision on U.S. policy. Rogers told Nixon that the State Department could stick with its current policy and go down fighting in the UN. Nixon said no. It would not look good, Nixon thought, to announce a presidential visit to Beijing and then turn around and vote against their entry to the UN. Rogers and Kissinger both agreed. The United States should do all it could to defend Taipei's seat. Kissinger pointed out that it might be

[99] Nixon, *RN*, 548-549; 553.

best to fight not on legal, but political grounds. Nixon concurred: "what we really need here…is to have George [Bush]…not to make a great big damn legal case for it, just say the nation shouldn't be expelled, and we're going to fight for them."[100]

Interestingly enough, the administration's strategy for defending Taipei's seat rested on the same principle as détente: "the realism to accept the world as it was, [and] the ingenuity to make the best of it."[101] The dual representation and important question resolutions Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Martin Herz had drafted were clearly intended to defend the ROC's seat without referencing legal arguments; in fact, he wrote Rogers that a primary requirement of any resolution was that it should avoid any legal arguments, since those would only provide "targets for rebuttal." Dual representation was based on "de facto reality" and not on legal principles, thus geopolitical reality and not international law should be the theoretical foundation for the resolution.[102]

The State Department's instructions to all its embassies on how to build support for the ROC's UN membership used the same geopolitical arguments that Herz delineated. Washington argued that "dual representation is the only fair solution," since neither the PRC nor the ROC actually represented *all* Chinese. Further, "both the PRC and the ROC exist. The UN should take cognizance of realities." The Department emphasized that it was not the UN's place to decide which government was the true Chinese government, nor should the vote determine whether countries maintained bilateral relations with the PRC or ROC. Finally, the State Department argued that expelling the ROC would be a bad precedent and likely be permanent, since it would

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[100] "Editorial Note," *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 377.
[101] John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 276.
[102] "Information Memorandum From the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations Affairs (Herz) to Secretary of State Rogers," July 28, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 384.

have to reenter the UN as a new member, which the PRC could veto from its place on the Security Council.[103]

In early September, Kissinger told Nixon that Rogers wanted to give the Security Council seat to the PRC. Kissinger said the State Department had tried to keep the Security Council seat out of the picture, but "there is not a prayer of maintaining [Taipei's] membership in the United Nations unless our dual representation resolution provides the Security Council seat to [Beijing]." Kissinger thought three factors determined what to do about the Security Council seat: domestic politics, international politics, and the upcoming presidential visit to Beijing. In the domestic arena, Kissinger assessed that conservatives would be angry at installing the PRC on the Security Council, but they would be angrier still if Taipei were voted out entirely. In the international arena, defending Taipei was becoming a matter of principle. Kissinger pointed out that their stated policy was to defend the ROC, and now they had to defend it.

Because the administration had broken through to Beijing and received an invitation for a presidential visit, Kissinger believed that they could be more explicit in their defense of Taipei. In June and July, Nixon worried that their actions in the UN might derail his opening with the PRC, but now his national security advisor did not believe the United States' actions in the UN would have any impact on Beijing. He believed the PRC knew its eventual entry into the UN was now inevitable, and thus would not "attach cardinal importance to what we do" to defend Taipei. Kissinger recommended giving the PRC the Security Council seat. He thought there might be

[103] "Telegram From the Department of State to All Posts," October 1, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 413.

negative repercussions domestically for installing the PRC on the Security Council but those might be outweighed by keeping Taipei in the General Assembly as a result.[104]

Nixon also personally contributed to the efforts to save Taipei's seat. Kissinger's deputy Alexander Haig sent Nixon a memo indicating a few instances where Nixon's intervention might help build support for the efforts in the UN. The memo is remarkable less for its contents than for the annotations Nixon made in the margins. Nixon appears more forceful than Haig in working for success in the UN. Haig noted that the administration needed to do more to pressure Botswana, noting that this "is a country for which we have done much recently." Nixon wrote in the margin, "No more aid." The Ghanaian president had requested a visit with Nixon on his upcoming trip to the United States. Haig suggested Nixon grant the Ghanaian president a visit and use it as an opportunity to pressure him for support. Instead, Nixon wrote "No, unless a vote," instead using a presidential visit as a bargaining chip. Malta was sending a new ambassador to Washington, and Nixon was scheduled to meet him. Haig requested that Nixon ask for support on the Important Question resolution. "Done," Nixon wrote.[105] These notes do not reveal a president who was apathetic toward whether or not the ROC remained in the UN.

Rogers alerted Nixon on October 12 that the United States was struggling to build a majority for both resolutions but that he was cautiously optimistic a victory was still possible. The administration might be able to get just over one-third of the General Assembly to vote against the Albanian Resolution. Thus if the Important Question resolution passed and the Albanian Resolution was defeated, they might be able to convince just enough supporters of the

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[104] "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 403.

[105] "Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to President Nixon," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 422.

Albanian Resolution to vote for the dual representation plan that they could win the vote. Rogers concluded that "everything thus depends on picking up the necessary number for the Important Question, thus requiring a two-thirds majority for adoption of the Albanian Resolution."[106]

There was one final conflict in U.S. policy that Nixon needed to resolve: how the vote and Kissinger's second trip to Beijing would impact each other. Rogers and Ambassador Bush worried that if Kissinger arrived in Washington immediately before the vote it would demonstrably impact the outcome. Haig disagreed, but Nixon overruled him. He instructed Haig to tell Kissinger to land in Hawaii or Alaska and wait to fly back to D.C. until the vote concluded.[107] Historian Nancy Bernkopf Tucker argues that the dates for Kissinger's second trip to Beijing were determined after the date of the UN vote was set, so the White House knew about the conflict from the start. Kissinger, she writes, argued that his visit to Beijing needed to happen before the vote so if the ROC was voted out it would not affect the trip.[108] Nixon and Kissinger wanted to balance relations with both Chinese governments. That balancing act worked both ways: relations with Taipei needed to be curtailed somewhat to allow room for normalization with Beijing.

Going into the vote, Bush and his staff were not optimistic. On October 22, they alerted the State Department that they did not believe the Important Question would pass. They suggested two possible contingency plans: 1) support a set of Saudi amendments to the Albanian Resolution which would fundamentally revise it, or 2) work towards deleting the provision of the Albanian Resolution that would expel Taipei. The message concurred with the State

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[106] "Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon," October 12, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 417.
[107] "Memorandum for the President's Files by the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)," October 22, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 425.
[108] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk*, 46.

Department's assessment that there was likely no hope for the United States' dual representation resolution.[109] Two days later, in a meeting with the Australian, New Zealand, and Japanese embassies, U.S. delegation officials announced that Washington "felt at the highest levels [that] our position was strong and we should press on with" the Important Question. There would be no contingency planning.[110]

Conclusion

On October 26, 1971, the State Department received a telegram from its UN embassy. "Unexpected defeat of [Important Question] by vote of 55-59-15 Oct 25 caused by massive last minute Arab defections…. Loss of IQ by four votes evening Oct 25 came as surprise when compared with conservative voting estimate of 60-57-13 early same morning." First, the Belgians had changed their vote from a yes to abstention. Then, Trinidad and Tobago changed from abstain to no. The session had not even begun yet. Once it did, things only got worse. Lebanon informed the U.S. delegation that Cyprus was thinking about changing its vote. A discussion with the Cypriots revealed the tip was true; they would no longer be supporting the Important Question resolution. Morocco then changed its vote from yes to abstain. Tunisia, Bahrain, Qatar, and Oman had all promised to support the United States. Tunisia inexplicably introduced several alternate resolutions and then abstained from voting on the Important Question. Oman's representative disappeared, only to be found in his hotel room saying he received instructions to leave the chamber and not vote. Qatar's representative informed the

[109] "Telegram From the Mission to the United Nations to the Department of State," October 22, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 426.
[110] "Telegram From the Mission to the United Nations to the Department of State," October 24, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 428.

United States that he had also been instructed not to vote, but preferred to abstain instead. Only Mexico changed its position to vote with the United States.[111]

The Important Question resolution had failed. Delegations began dancing for joy in the aisles. Bush was hissed as he tried to speak from the podium. Tears welled in U Thant's eyes. The ROC foreign minister made one last statement from the floor of the General Assembly, and the ROC left the United Nations.

This was what Kissinger returned to when he finally returned from his visit to Beijing. George H.W. Bush recalled that in his first conversation with Kissinger after the vote, the national security advisor was furious.[112] Congress would be livid.[113] By the time Kissinger returned, some Congressmen had already made statements about cutting funding for the UN.[114] Yet, though the ROC no longer sat in the UN and the public outcry was dramatic, on a substantive level Taipei's ouster was not a major disaster for the Nixon administration. Many Congressmen were against cutting funding to the UN over this vote.[115] William F. Buckley Jr., the influential conservative commentator, blamed the UN for the ROC's expulsion more than he blamed Nixon.[116]

So the ROC's expulsion from the United Nations was not a complete disaster for the Nixon administration even as it was definitely a political setback. The vote's decidedly mixed results were the product of a nearly year-long, dispersed policymaking process in which the administration tried to occupy the middle ground between the conflicting needs of opening

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[111] "Telegram From the Mission to the United Nations to the Department of State," October 26, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations*, 1969-1972*, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 429.
[112] George H.W. Bush, *All the Best, George Bush*, 154.
[113] Kissinger, 785.
[114] Keatley, "Rogers Calmly Accepts UN Loss on China."
[115] Ibid.
[116] William F. Buckley Jr., "United Nations Loses Again," *Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 1971, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times (1881-1990), http://libproxy.lib.unc.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/156705879?accountid=14244.

relations with Beijing and maintaining the status quo with Taipei. In terms of the policymaking process, the vote was the culmination of months of strategizing and consulting with allies by the State Department as they tried to present the White House with the best possible options for the vote in October, and of months of weighing and considering by Nixon and Kissinger about which options fit best with their as yet uncertain initiatives toward Beijing. In terms of the policy product, the summer of 1971 was an uncertain time for U.S.-PRC relations and Nixon did not want to wreck his chances with Beijing, because normalized relations with the PRC were critical to his goal of containing the Soviet Union diplomatically instead of militarily. At the same time, he did not want his overtures to Beijing to result in ousting the ROC from the UN, because that would violate his commitment to maintain all existing treaty commitments. In the end the ROC was ousted, so did Nixon fail? He certainly did not get what he wanted.

Some historians, however, have implied that there was nothing the administration could have done to save Taipei's seat.[117] If all roads led to Taipei's ouster, what did Nixon get out of picking the path he did? He was trying to balance relations with both Beijing and Taipei, and a dual representation resolution combined with making the ROC's ouster an important question seemed the best way to do so. Washington would support Beijing's entry to the UN and defend Taipei's membership, and would justify that position using the détente principle of geopolitical reality. In that sense, the administration's strategy in the UN was an example of implementing détente on the tactical level: they used an acceptance of geopolitical realities to justify balancing a new era of relations with the PRC with a continued commitment to the ROC. During the 1971 UN vote on Chinese representation, international political developments made that balance difficult to maintain. Nixon's next challenge would be even more difficult in some respects. In Shanghai on February 28, 1972, the president would announce his Taiwan policy to the world.

[117] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk*, 49.

Chapter 3

A Policy Everyone Can Agree On: The Alternative History of the Shanghai Communiqué

On the final day of President Richard Nixon's historic visit to mainland China in February 1972, the administration and the People's Republic of China (PRC) issued what came to be known as the Shanghai Communiqué. This press release used an unconventional dialectic format where the United States and the PRC stated their strategic worldviews, their positions on matters of mutual interest such as the conflict in Korea, the Vietnam War, tensions between India and Pakistan, and the political status of the Taiwan island, and then jointly stated what goals and principles they held in common. The two countries' positions on Taiwan received their own sections. The infamous U.S. statement told the world that

> The United States acknowledges that all Chinese on either side of the Taiwan Strait maintain there is but one China and that Taiwan is a part of China. The United States Government does not challenge that position. It reaffirms its interest in a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves. With this prospect in mind, it affirms the ultimate objective of the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations from Taiwan. In the meantime, it will progressively reduce its forces and military installations on Taiwan as the tension in the area diminishes.[118]

At first glance, these sentences seemed to reverse nearly thirty years of U.S. foreign policy. It appeared the Nixon administration had downgraded Taiwan's status from home of "the sole legitimate government of all China"[119] to merely "a part of China."[120] The real meaning of that passage, however, was far more complicated.

Richard Nixon visited the PRC from February 22 to 28, 1972 and held substantive but noncommittal talks with Prime Minister Zhou Enlai and Communist Party Chairman Mao

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[118] "Joint Statement Following Discussions With Leaders of the People's Republic of China," February 27, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 203.
[119] "Telegram From the the [sic] Embassy in Australia to the Department of State," March 2, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 332.
[120] John H. Holdridge, *Crossing the Divide: An Insider's Account of Normalization of U.S.-China Relations*, ADST-DACOR Diplomats and Diplomacy (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), 266.

Zedong. The Shanghai Communiqué was the first report most of the world saw of the content of these talks. The two governments would not sign a treaty or other official agreement at the end of the visit; they would only release this statement. Thus, it was important from a political perspective that the wording walk the fine line between maintaining long-standing positions and indicating a new era in U.S.-PRC relations.

Taiwan policy was the linchpin of Nixon's grand strategy. Normalizing relations with Beijing was critical to implementing détente, and normalization with Beijing required articulating a policy on the island and the ROC that was acceptable to Beijing and that maintained U.S. relations with the ROC. When Nixon went to Beijing in February 1972 to talk with Mao and Zhou and officially start the normalization process, he was going to articulate that policy; the Shanghai Communiqué was going to summarize what he told Mao and Zhou. So the problem for the administration as they prepared for the presidential visit and during the visit itself, especially when it came to drafting the Taiwan section of the Shanghai Communiqué, was in working out how they wanted to portray the new relationship with Beijing in relation to long-standing U.S. policies and international commitments.

What stands out about the Shanghai Communiqué in the larger context of Nixon's Taiwan policy is that it did not involve the dispersed policymaking process that characterized the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol and the preparations for the 1971 UN vote. The president and his national security advisor were really the only two people wrestling during the winter of 1971-72 with how to portray U.S.-ROC relations in the midst of normalization with the PRC. Thus, understanding the meaning of the Taiwan section of the Shanghai Communiqué allows us to isolate Nixon's conception of détente and how it would work on the tactical level. However, historians have not paid adequate attention to how the Nixon administration went about drafting

the Shanghai Communiqué, so the existing scholarship does not fully explicate the complex meaning of the Taiwan section. The negotiations that settled the final wording involved contentious debate as Nixon and Kissinger tried to work out the details of détente with Communist China.

The story of the Shanghai Communiqué began in July 1971, when Henry Kissinger made his famous secret trip to Beijing to commence the first high-level talks between the United States and the People's Republic of China. During that visit, he and Prime Minister Zhou agreed that Nixon should make an official presidential visit to the country to discuss normalizing relations. This would be the first time a sitting U.S. president had visited China. In October 1971, as the State Department was in the final frantic days of gathering support for Taipei's representation in the UN, Kissinger returned to Beijing. This time, his mission was to discuss the logistics of the presidential visit.

Part of Kissinger's assignment was to negotiate the wording of the press release the two governments would issue at the end of Nixon's trip. Initially, the White House draft was formulaic, but Beijing wanted something a bit more substantive. By the end of Kissinger's visit, he and Zhou remained hung up on the specific wording, especially in the section on Taiwan. So they put their negotiations on hold and agreed to finalize the wording when Kissinger returned with Nixon in February 1972.[121]

Over the course of the next few months, the White House and State Department worked to prepare policy positions for the talks between Nixon and the PRC leadership. Kissinger and the president also discussed strategy and the details of the Shanghai Communiqué. The two men decided to take a conciliatory approach while in Beijing in order to give the impression that

[121] "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 165.

Nixon understood the needs and interests of the PRC. They also divided the dispute with Beijing over the legal status of Taiwan into five key principles that they could agree on with the PRC while maintaining relations with the Republic of China (ROC), though Nixon worried that the Shanghai Communiqué would give U.S. conservatives the impression that he was turning his back on the Nationalists.

Over the course of the presidential visit, Kissinger and PRC Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Ch'iao Kuan-hua also worked to finalize the Communiqué.[122] Secretary of State William Rogers and Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Marshall Green received a copy of the final draft the night before it was to be released. They took issue with the fact that the Communiqué did not refer to the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty between the U.S. and the ROC. They managed to force an angry Henry Kissinger back to the negotiating table over the matter. On February 28, the last day of the trip, Kissinger and Green held a press conference to issue the statement, and officially ushered in a new era in U.S.-PRC relations.

The Shanghai Communiqué was not so much a turning point in U.S.-ROC relations as it was a continuation of the policy that had emerged in 1969 with the cancellation of the Taiwan Strait Patrol and continued in 1971 as the State Department fought for Taipei's right to representation in the United Nations General Assembly. Nixon did not want to walk away from the Nationalists as he leaned toward the Communists; he wanted to maintain relations with the former even as he normalized relations with the latter. In 1969 the administration had balanced the signals the administration was sending to Taipei and Beijing. In 1971 they had crafted a policy that justified why the two governments should both be represented in the UN. With the Shanghai Communiqué, Nixon tried to maintain that balance when he had to articulate a policy

[122] "Memorandum of Conversation," February 24, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 199.

on U.S. relations with the ROC in the context of a new relationship with the PRC. The President sought to craft a policy everyone could agree on: one that would be acceptable to the ROC, the PRC, and the U.S. public. The administration had been working toward such a policy since September 1969, but in February 1972 the time came to put that policy down on paper.

The Nixon Way

The late 1960s and early 1970s were a time of great political upheaval in the United States. The traditional political alignments were breaking down, and Richard Nixon wanted to take advantage of that shift. His goal was to build a broad voting coalition around the Republican Party but founded on an acceptance of existing New Deal institutions and a desire to work with those institutions to implement Republican policies. The *New York Times* characterized Nixon's domestic policy as "a 'baffling blend of Republicanism and radicalism.'"[123]

British historian Robert Mason argues that this sought-after new voting coalition had not coalesced by Nixon's 1968 election campaign, however. Instead, Nixon spent his first term building the coalition through policies meant to unite the spectrum of voters generally located between the center-left and the right. He particularly focused on what was then called "middle America," or the "aggregate which at its widest included all those whites who were neither affluent nor poor: its center appeared to lie somewhere between the upper ranks of blue-collar workers and the lower ranks of white-collar workers and the self-employed." Nixon claimed that his strategy for building a new Republican majority based on middle America was summed up by a campaign sign he saw in Ohio: "Bring us together."[124] The Nixon administration would

[123] Robert Mason, *Richard Nixon and the Quest for a New Majority* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 1; 2; 6; 57.
[124] Ibid., 37; 43; 37.

create a new Republican coalition by introducing policies that voters from the center-left to the far right could all agree on.

On the right end of Nixon's target spectrum was Bill Buckley. A political commentator with a colorful background, William F. Buckley Jr. grew up fluent in Spanish, French, and English. He matriculated at Yale where he was recruited by the CIA, and spent the late 1940s and early 1950s "pretending to work in an export-import business while infiltrating the student political movement in Mexico City,"[125] before founding the conservative political magazine *National Review*. The story of his relationship with Richard Nixon was equally discombobulated.

National Review was supportive of Vice President Nixon in the 1950s, even as it was only moderately supportive of Eisenhower. The publication was less favorable toward President Nixon, however. Its writers were uneasy with Nixon's domestic policies, which they believed left the federal government too much of a role, and by his "political strategy," which one commentator called "a simultaneous envelopment from both the right and left flanks…[that] makes it difficult at times to figure out just what's what…." Buckley's personal relationship with the president was similar to *National Review*'s. When John Ashbrook, Republican Congressman from Ohio, challenged the president in the 1971 Republican primaries, Buckley and his publication endorsed the more conservative Ashbrook. When Nixon won the party's nomination, Buckley switched his allegiance back to the president, but only because "the potential consequences of electing [the Democratic nominee] McGovern appeared worse" than the consequences of another Nixon term. Buckley was vocally displeased with Nixon's initiatives toward the PRC, although he was included among the press that attended the historic China

[125] Linda Bridges and John R. Coyne Jr., *Strictly Right: William F. Buckley Jr. and the American Conservative Movement* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2007), 9; 19; 22-23.

trip.[126] When Nixon and Kissinger strategized the wording of the Shanghai Communiqué, Buckley's reaction was a key concern of the president's.[127]

On the other end of Nixon's coalition was Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson. Raised in a devout Lutheran family of Norwegian immigrants, Jackson was trained as a lawyer before being elected to the House of Representatives. Though he was originally an isolationist, his views on foreign policy changed as a result of the attack on Pearl Harbor. He became a proponent of the militarist foreign policy strategy epitomized by NSC 68, the Truman administration foreign policy document that conceptualized the Cold War as a "long-term" military struggle between the United States and Soviet Union. Jackson opposed Eisenhower's cost-saving approach to the U.S. military, believing "that the United States not only should, but could, spend significantly more on defense."[128]

Thus, Senator Jackson's stance on the military was diametrically opposed to President Nixon's détente strategy of reduced U.S. military commitments. Jackson was a prominent opponent of easing tensions with the U.S.S.R. On China, however, he and the president were much more kindred spirits. Jackson's biographer says that "he admired, and at times romanticized, the Chinese…for their emphasis on hard work, strong families, and education, the very qualities he admired most about his own Norwegian background." Thus, he was a wholehearted supporter of Nixon's initiatives toward Beijing.[129]

Nixon's domestic political strategy was to bridge the gap between the Buckleys and the Jacksons (as much as possible) by introducing policies on which they could both agree (or at

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[126] Bridges and Coyne, 46-47; 126; 138; 145; 142.
[127] "Conversation Between the President and his Assistant for National Security Affairs," February 14, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 192.
[128] Robert G. Kaufman, *Henry M. Jackson: A Life in Politics*, The Emil and Kathleen Sick Lecture-Book Series in Western History and Biography (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 11 and 9; 22; 29; 33-34; 57; 89.
[129] Ibid., 200; 36; 243.

least support grudgingly). This strategy was executed in the context of a large-scale political realignment in U.S. politics. Nixon believed he could take advantage of that realignment by uniting the Buckleys and Jacksons of U.S. politics into a coalition that accepted and worked within New Deal era institutions to implement Republican policies.

In many ways, Nixon used that same strategy in dealing with the two Chinese governments. The steady ebb of support for the U.S. position on Chinese representation in the UN could be taken as a sign of an international political realignment.[130] Nixon's China policy was an effort to take advantage of that political realignment by accepting the existence of Communist China (much like he accepted the existence of the New Deal institutions), and working with it to implement U.S. policy. The Shanghai Communiqué was Nixon's main effort to build support for his China policy by limiting that policy to those positions on which the Buckleys and Jacksons of his coalition could both agree (or at least support grudgingly).

Manufacturing Agreement with Beijing

The White House broke down the U.S.-PRC disagreement over Taiwan into five basic points, known as the five principles. First was the longstanding debate over a one-China policy or a two-China policy that had plagued the State Department in its efforts to keep the ROC in the UN. Second was the future of U.S. troops stationed on Taiwan. Third was whether the United States supported the ROC's desire to launch an assault to regain control of mainland China.

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[130] Richard Bush argues a "shifting balance of power in the United Nations" prompted the Eisenhower administration to consider allowing the PRC to join the organization (Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes: U.S.-Taiwan Relations Since 1942*, Taiwan in the Modern World (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 103). Secretary Rogers' memo to Nixon warning that a "bandwagon psychology" was setting in at the UN as countries normalized relations with the PRC suggests another shift in the balance of power was occurring in early 1971 ("Memorandum From Secretary of State Rogers to President Nixon," July 3, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: US Department of State Office of the Historian, 2004), Document 369.)

Fourth was whether the United States would acquiesce to Japanese designs on Taiwan. Fifth was the emergence of Taiwanese independence movements.[131]

Nixon and Kissinger agreed that the United States and the PRC technically agreed on each of these points.[132] The United States had long denied that it had a "two-China policy."[133] Most U.S. troops on Taiwan were there to support the Vietnam War or other operations in the Pacific, so an end to the Vietnam conflict would reduce the number of troops on the island and others could be transferred to other bases in the Pacific.[134] The United States had never supported Chiang's desire to revive the civil war.[135] There is no evidence that Washington wanted Japan to expand into Taiwan. Finally, there was no reason to support Taiwanese independence movements because the government in Taipei did not want an independent Taiwan.[136] The administration could agree with Beijing on each of these five points without reversing any U.S. policies.

Neither Nixon nor Kissinger believed that agreeing with Beijing on these points was in any way detrimental to U.S. relations with the ROC. Nixon did think that others could misperceive agreement with Beijing as detrimental to the ROC. He told Kissinger a week before the presidential visit that he did not want to give Bill Buckley reason to blame him for selling Taiwan down the river, because "we haven't sold Formosa down the river. We haven't at all."

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[131] "Conversation Between the President and his Assistant for National Security Affairs," February 14, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976*, Vol. XVII, Document 192.
[132] Ibid.
[133] As discussed in Chapter 2, this was the idea that the Chinese civil war had split the theoretical country of "China" into two successor states: the Republic and the People's Republic, both with legitimate governments. A "one-China" policy would imply that only one of the two rivals governments was legitimate. Both the PRC and the ROC maintained there was only one China, and that the other government was illegitimate.
[134] "Memorandum From Phil Odeen of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)," March 29, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 216.
[135] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, "Strategic Ambiguity Or Strategic Clarity?" in *Dangerous Strait: The U.S.-Taiwan-China Crisis*, ed., Nancy Bernkopf Tucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 188.
[136] "Conversation Among the President, his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), and his Chief of Staff (Haldeman)," March 13, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 212.

Kissinger shrugged off the matter. The national security advisor did not share these concerns about public misperception, because it was clear to him that the administration was not making any substantive concessions on Taiwan: the five principles were all longstanding U.S. policy.[137]

Obscuring Disagreement

Most communiqués do not use a dialectic format like the Shanghai Communiqué.[138] The Shanghai Communiqué was organized by topic and set out each side's unique position, then set out areas of agreement. Scholars frequently criticize the U.S. position on Taiwan as being too weak in stating U.S. interests and too conciliatory toward Beijing.[139] From the beginning, however, the administration had not wanted to state clear positions. The unique format was the product of reconciling what Beijing wanted out of the communiqué and what the United States wanted. Beijing wanted the communiqué to bluntly delineate disagreements. Washington wanted it to obscure disagreements.

The White House's strategy for the meetings in Beijing was designed to signal to the PRC leadership that Nixon understood their perspectives and needs. Kissinger's briefings to Nixon emphasized the importance of demonstrating to Mao and Zhou that he understood their interests and their need to placate their domestic constituencies.[140] Nixon obviously took that lesson to heart. While in Beijing, in regards to Taiwan, Nixon told Zhou

> I know the Prime Minister…has a problem. This is an issue which basically is an irritant and has a high emotional content and therefore he needs to show progress on the issue.

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[137] "Conversation Between the President and his Assistant for National Security Affairs," February 14, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 192.
[138] Ambassador Winston Lord, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training: Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, April 28, 1998, 145-146.
[139] Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes*, 136.
[140] "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," February 19, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 193.

> That's his side, and I recognize this. I am taking that into consideration as to what we can say in the joint communiqué.[141]

Nixon reinforced how well he could identify with Zhou's need to placate his domestic audiences by drawing parallels with his own domestic challenges. While the Americans would do their best to be as conciliatory as possible towards Beijing's stance on Taiwan, they needed to make their own position clear, or else they might give Nixon's opponents "the opportunity to gang up and say in effect that the American President went to [Beijing] and sold Taiwan down the river." The communiqué needed to adequately placate the PRC's public and the U.S. public.[142]

This logic was exactly same as that the State Department had used in 1969 to reassure the ROC that the end of the Taiwan Strait Patrol did not represent a change in U.S. policy. Nixon assured Zhou that his intentions were to normalize relations with Beijing; unfortunately, domestic factors outside his control forced him to pursue that intention in a way that, at first glance, might make it seem as if his desire to open relations with the PRC was insincere. Many scholars reference Nixon's complaints to Zhou and Mao about domestic political constraints as evidence that Nixon *wanted* to open ties with Beijing but was *forced* to maintain ties with Taipei. This reasoning puts too much faith in Nixon's comments to the PRC leaders. The State Department had made the same claims to the ROC less than three years earlier: that the United States was committed to defend Taiwan but domestic budgetary constraints forced the U.S. Navy to withdraw from the Taiwan Strait. Just because Nixon told Zhou that he was obligated by domestic politics to stand by the ROC does not mean that was his only motivation for avoiding making concessions on Taiwan. From the beginning, the administration's strategy for the Shanghai Communiqué was to avoid making specific commitments.

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[141] Yes, Nixon was talking to Zhou in the third person. "Memorandum of Conversation," February 22, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 196.
[142] Ibid.

Kissinger took a draft statement to Beijing in October 1971 that he intended to "glide over differences and emphasize common ground."[143] NSC staffer John Holdridge had drafted it based on standard communiqués released after similar presidential visits.[144] As an example of just how vague the administration intended the statement to be, the draft Kissinger first handed to Zhou made no reference to Taiwan, Vietnam, Korea, or South Asia in general. Zhou Enlai agreed to use the draft as a basis for discussion, but Kissinger quickly realized that it would not last long in its current state. The Chinese and the Americans had very different ideas of what the communiqué's purpose was and how it should be written. "[Zhou's] emphasis was on a sharp delineation of our respective positions," Kissinger reported to Nixon. "My objectives were to dilute the rhetoric and shorten the length of opposing views, and expand areas of agreement."[145] Those two positions would prove very difficult to reconcile.

Zhou presented Kissinger with an alternative draft that was more acceptable to Beijing. It bore no resemblance to the American draft. Kissinger was dismayed that "there was almost no mention of agreed principles" anywhere in the PRC version. This belligerence was symptomatic of the entire document. In one famous incident, an incredulous Kissinger explained to Zhou that no "American President [could] sign a document which said that revolution had become the irresistible trend of history or that 'the people's revolutionary struggles are just.'" Specifically, it identified Taiwan as "'the crucial issue' obstructing normalization of bilateral relations" and tied normalization of relations between Washington and Beijing to an agreement on Taiwan's status.[146]

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[143] "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 165.
[144] Holdridge, *Crossing the Divide*, 68.
[145] "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 165.
[146] Ibid.

Though the United States ended up adopting Zhou's dialectic format, Kissinger consistently worked to moderate the language and expand on areas of agreement. In response to Zhou saying sovereignty over Taiwan was the key dispute between Washington and Beijing, Kissinger's second draft said that all Chinese recognized that Taiwan is part of China.[147] This wording would find its way into the final draft. The White House had not wanted to take a position on Taiwan and, in negotiating with the PRC over the wording, continued trying to avoid doing so.

"…there is but one China and…Taiwan is a part of China"[148]

The Taiwan section begins by acknowledging that Taiwan is part of China. This is arguably the most controversial statement of the section because it is used as evidence that Nixon tacitly agreed that Beijing was the rightful government of Taiwan.[149] The statement was not all that remarkable, however, because even the ROC agreed that "Taiwan is part of China."[150] In making this statement, Nixon chose the lowest common denominator: he articulated U.S. policy as only that on which everyone agreed.

The real dispute was whether Beijing or Taipei was the legitimate government of China. The White House avoided this issue entirely by using wordplay to create ambiguity. Nixon and Kissinger talked with the PRC leaders only about *Taiwan* the island, and rarely about the *ROC* the country. Upon return from Nixon's February visit to Beijing, Kissinger met with the ROC's ambassador to the United States. Kissinger was apparently taken off guard by the diplomat's

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[147] "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," undated, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 165.
[148] "Joint Statement Following Discussions With Leaders of the People's Republic of China," February 27, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 203.
[149] Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes*, 136.
[150] "Memorandum of Conversation," March 1, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 205.

assertion that the United States had made a critical error in only referring to "Taiwan" and never to "the Republic of China" in the communiqué. The ambassador told the national security advisor that not mentioning the ROC implied it was not a legitimate government. Kissinger acknowledged the misunderstanding, but impressed upon the ambassador that "Taiwan" referred only to the "geographical entity," thus avoiding the question of ROC legitimacy entirely.[151] While in Beijing, Nixon himself consistently avoided commenting on the political identity of Taiwan. When Zhou pressured him on it, he changed the subject.

"…a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question"[152]

The Taiwan section next called for a peaceful settlement of the conflict between the ROC and the PRC. That line was really there for appearances' sake; it would look bad for the administration not to support peaceful conflict resolution. Calls for a peaceful resolution were actually disguised support for the status quo. Spontaneous peaceful settlement of the Chinese civil war was unlikely, and the United States was still committed to defend the ROC against an attack by Beijing. Thus, with both possible avenues for resolving the conflict closed off, the status quo was effectively perpetuated.

The call for a peaceful solution was just for appearances, because the administration's behavior reveals a three-pronged effort to make sure that the Shanghai Communiqué represented a continuation of the status quo and not the first steps towards the PRC absorbing Taiwan. The first prong was to call for a peaceful settlement without trying to bring the two sides together. The second was to tell the ROC that the administration would not pressure them to negotiate

[151] "Memorandum of Conversation," March 1, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 205.
[152] "Joint Statement Following Discussions With Leaders of the People's Republic of China," February 27, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 203.

with the PRC, and the third was to reaffirm the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty. The whole effort rested on the White House's assessment that Beijing would always claim the right to forcibly oust Chiang Kai-shek and his government from Taiwan. In fact, at one point Rogers had proposed that the communiqué include a renunciation of force by the PRC, but Kissinger denounced that idea as "inconceivable," and Nixon agreed to move ahead without that provision.[153]

When the Shanghai Communiqué called for "a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan question by the Chinese themselves,"[154] the United States said it was up to Beijing and Taipei to determine between them which government was legitimate by negotiating. The ROC and the PRC were still parties in a civil war, and their leaders referred to each other as "bandits."[155] Spontaneous negotiations were not imminent, and commencing them was not a priority for the administration. Nixon and Kissinger made it clear to the ROC that the administration would take no initiative in bringing Beijing and Taipei together. After he returned to Washington, Nixon reassured the ROC's ambassador to the United States that unlike in the Israeli-Arab conflict, the administration had no desire to mediate an end to the PRC-ROC conflict.[156]

The Nixon administration would not even quietly pressure its ally to negotiate. Kissinger told both the ROC ambassador in Washington and the ROC Foreign Minister that the

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[153] "Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs," February 14, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 192.
[154] "Joint Statement Following Discussions With Leaders of the People's Republic of China," February 27, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 203.
[155] "Memorandum of Conversation," February 21, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 194.
[156] "Conversation Among President Nixon, his Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), and the Ambassador of the Republic of China (Shen)," March 6, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 207.

administration *discouraged* them from negotiating with the Communists.[157] As the national security advisor explained to the ROC's foreign minister, the administration called for a peaceful settlement so as to placate international opinion. The administration would not put pressure on the ROC to negotiate, so the likelihood of peaceful negotiations was next to none. Further, as part of calling for peaceful negotiations, the United States had said it would not allow the issue to be settled by force,[158] which was reinforced by its obligation under the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty to defend the ROC against attack. In effect, the administration had made both possible methods of resolving the dispute over the ROC's legitimacy untenable. They had cemented the status quo.

Actually, the Shanghai Communiqué had almost renounced the 1954 defense treaty. Secretary of State Rogers and Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Marshall Green had been given the final draft of the communiqué the day before it was supposed to be released. Green found a problem. The administration reaffirmed its defense treaties with Korea and Japan, but the Taiwan section made no mention of defense treaties. In the 1950s, Secretary of State Dean Acheson had made a speech outlining a U.S. "defense perimeter" in the Pacific that did not include Korea. A few months later, North Korea invaded South Korea. Traditional wisdom held that Acheson's omission of Korea from U.S. defense commitments had signaled to the North Koreans that the Truman administration would not get involved in a Korean conflict.[159] Worried about history repeating itself, Green got in touch with Rogers.

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[157] "Memorandum of Conversation," November 15, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 172; "Memorandum of Conversation," December 30, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 180.

[158] "Memorandum of Conversation," December 30, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 180.

[159] This was Green's view as told in Marshall Green, "Evolution of US-China Policy 1956-1973: Memoirs of an Insider," 1988, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training: Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, Chapter

Rogers phoned Nixon's suite, and Bob Haldeman, Nixon's chief of staff, answered the phone. Haldeman refused to wake Nixon and hung up on the Secretary of State.[160]

Green, infuriated that the administration was about to make a major diplomatic gaffe, ran into Ron Ziegler, Nixon's press aide. Green explained the error to him. In his memoirs, Green posits that Ziegler told Haldeman, who then decided to tell Nixon. When Nixon heard about the inconsistency he was irate. In his memoirs, Kissinger writes that Nixon was upset the State Department decided to "nitpick" the document, and was afraid they would go about "bad-mouthing the Communiqué." Green's memoirs say that Nixon was upset at Kissinger for not having noticed the inconsistency before, and "having put him on the spot" within hours of the communiqué's release.[161]

Green's guess at the reason behind Nixon's anger is likely more accurate than Kissinger's since Nixon himself had spotted the same inconsistency as Green a week before. Kissinger convinced him that it was not a serious issue, since Taiwan was addressed in a separate section from Korea and Japan. Nixon comforted himself by emphasizing that the U.S. defense treaty with the ROC still implicitly backed the communiqué.[162] So U.S. forces may withdraw from Taiwan, but the ROC would still be militarily allied with the United States against any Beijing attack. The administration balanced the omission of the treaty from the communiqué by having Kissinger reaffirm the U.S. defense commitment to the ROC at the press conference releasing the communiqué.[163]

VI. Historian Julian Zelizer offers the same interpretation of Acheson's speech in Julian E. Zelizer, *Arsenal of Democracy: The Politics of National Security – From World War II to the War on Terrorism* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 99.

[160] Green, "Evolution of US-China Policy," Chapter VI.

[161] Ibid.

[162] "Conversation Between President Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs," February 14, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 192.

[163] Holdridge, *Crossing the Divide*, 95.

"…the withdrawal of all U.S. forces and military installations"[164]

Finally, the Taiwan section declared the United States' intention of withdrawing its troops from the island. Though the defense treaty was still in place, withdrawing U.S. troops seemed to be a sign of abandoning Taiwan. However, Nixon repeatedly emphasized to Zhou that this military withdrawal from Taiwan would happen "regardless" of any reciprocal actions on the PRC's part.[165] Nixon was not subordinating military policy to diplomacy, but using military decisions as diplomatic capital. This is the same thing the White House did when the Navy cancelled the Taiwan Strait Patrol. Recall that the Pentagon cancelled the patrol as part of a larger program of defense spending cuts. Kissinger and the State Department used the planned military withdrawal as a signal of the administration's peaceful intentions toward Beijing.

While in Beijing, Nixon used assurances of U.S. troops withdrawals from Taiwan to avoid commenting on the island's political status. At one point, Zhou aggressively confronted Nixon on the disagreement between Washington and Beijing over Taiwan. Kissinger had once mentioned that resolving the Taiwan issue could take ten years. Ten years was too long, Zhou argued. The prime minister wanted a resolution much sooner, and offered to take out Chiang Kai-shek.[166] Kissinger had warned Nixon that the PRC premier was capable of frank outbursts like this. "You should not let such statements stand but rather respond very firmly," he had counseled.[167]

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[164] "Joint Statement Following Discussions With Leaders of the People's Republic of China," February 27, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 203.
[165] "Memorandum of Conversation," February 22, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 196.
[166] "Memorandum of Conversation," February 24, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, China, 1969-1972, ed. Steven E. Phillips (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), Document 199.
[167] "Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon," February 19, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 193.

Nixon's "firm response" was to change the subject. He assured the prime minister that his goal was normalization of relations. Taiwan of course was a critical point of contention they needed to work out as part of any normalization process. To that end, Nixon was willing to make certain concessions to Beijing. He went on to assure Zhou that "with regard to Taiwan I do not believe a permanent American presence—whatever happens at our meetings—is necessary to American security," and thus he intended to withdraw U.S. military forces from the island. He treated Zhou to a lengthy discussion of the impact that domestic political opinion and the needs of the Vietnam War would have on the speed at which U.S. troops would leave Taiwan, but concluded by reiterating that a U.S. drawdown was inevitable.[168] Zhou had talked about political authority over Taiwan; Nixon countered with a discussion about withdrawing U.S. forces. They were related topics since U.S. forces were largely credited with keeping the PRC military from invading the island, but they were also subtly different, especially in light of the fact that these discussions did not cover the matter of the United States' defense treaty with the ROC.

Conclusion

In terms of the policy product, the Shanghai Communiqué was the result of a concerted effort to reduce U.S. policy on Taiwan to the lowest common denominator, to only those facts on which Nixon and Kissinger believed everyone from Mao Zedong to Chiang Kai-shek to Bill Buckley could agree. Crafting such a policy was an incredibly difficult endeavor. The nature of the stalemated Chinese civil war meant that Beijing and Taipei were both alert to any diplomatic actions that might comment on either's legitimacy. Both wanted to be recognized as "the sole

[168] "Memorandum of Conversation," February 24, 1972, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. XVII, Document 199.

legitimate government of all China," of both the mainland and Taiwan.[169] By avoiding any mention of the ROC, strategically using meaningless idealistic calls for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, and emphasizing areas of agreement while downplaying substantive disputes, Nixon and Kissinger sought to turn the Shanghai Communiqué into a summary of their three-year balancing act of relations with both Chinese governments. They sought to create a policy that everyone could agree on.

In terms of the policymaking process, the communiqué was the result of a centralized process that is unique in the history of Taiwan policymaking during the first Nixon administration. Nixon and Kissinger entirely controlled the drafting process: the national security advisor negotiated the wording with the PRC's Vice Foreign Minister, and he cleared the drafts only with the president. Yet even in this instance, at a critical moment, Nixon listened to the advice of the State Department even though it contradicted Kissinger's advice. Contrary to Gaddis's assertion that the White House cut the foreign policy bureaucracy out of the policymaking process to the detriment of relations with countries other than the USSR and PRC,[170] in terms of Taiwan policymaking the White House did utilize the expertise of the State Department, and the Department frequently played a key role in determining the content of the final policy. Secretary of State Dean Acheson omitted Korea from the U.S. defense perimeter and is frequently blamed for giving the North Koreans the confidence to invade South Korea; when Green and Rogers convinced Nixon to change the wording of the Shanghai Communiqué so that it did not imply a renunciation of the U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty with the ROC, they

[169] "Telegram From the the [sic] Embassy in Australia to the Department of State," March 2, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, Document 332.
[170] John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 332.

could arguably have preempted the possibility of a similar oversight. How the administration made its Taiwan policy was important in determining what the content of that policy was.

The Taiwan section of the Shanghai Communiqué ended up being a smokescreen. It was the culmination of the first Nixon administration's Taiwan policy because it put on paper what they had been trying to do in practice since 1969: the communiqué obscured the fundamental disputes between Beijing and Washington in the hopes of maintaining the status quo for as long as possible. By maintaining the status quo, Nixon took another step toward achieving his goal of remaking relations with Beijing while preserving ties with Taipei. In that sense, the Shanghai Communiqué was détente on paper. The détente grand strategy was founded on recognizing geopolitical realities and working inside the confines of that reality;[171] it affirmed existing U.S. commitments and called for eased tensions with the Communist powers. The Shanghai Communiqué acknowledged the reality that both Chinese governments claimed there was only one China; it cemented the status quo of relations with Taipei by preempting all possible methods of reuniting Taiwan with the mainland, and it signaled a coming normalization of relations between Washington and Beijing.

That outcome was not predetermined in any sense. Nixon and Kissinger struggled during the course of negotiations with the PRC to draft a communiqué that met their goals and convinced Beijing they were serious about normalizing relations. In order to do both, the president and his national security advisor sought to limit U.S. policy to the lowest common denominator by finding and taking a stand on only those positions on which everyone agreed. Reactions to that policy were mixed, especially at home. Barry Goldwater, the conservative U.S. senator and former GOP presidential candidate, supported Nixon's initiatives toward Beijing;

[171] Gaddis, 276.

Bill Buckley did not.[172] Historians argue the communiqué reflected Nixon's acquiescence to Beijing's demands.[173] Yet understanding what the Taiwan section says about the island is only part of understanding the policies hidden in the communiqué's language. The other part of understanding the Taiwan section is in understanding how Nixon and Kissinger arrived that wording and how they acted on the policies the communiqué appeared to articulate.

The full story of how the Nixon administration drafted the Shanghai Communiqué demonstrates that it was another moment when the administration tried to implement détente on the tactical level. They sought to signal a new era of relations with Beijing and preserve their existing commitments to the ROC in the same document, thus reconciling the internal contradiction between détente's requirement of normalized relations with Beijing and the Nixon Doctrine's reaffirmation of U.S. treaty commitments, including the commitment to Taipei. In Beijing in February 1972, Nixon and Kissinger sought to balance relations with the PRC and ROC by limiting U.S. policy to the lowest common denominator and articulating a policy everyone could agree on.

[172] William F. Buckley, Jr, "Goldwater Errs in His Defense of the China Communiqué," *Los Angeles Times*. March 10, 1972, sec. Part II, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Los Angeles Times (1881-1990).
[173] Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes*, 136.

Conclusion

In 1998, Winston Lord, Kissinger's special assistant, was interviewed as part of the State Department's oral history program. When asked about Nixon and Kissinger's attitude toward Taiwan in this period, he had this to say:

> From the very beginning, and this is reflected in the Shanghai Communiqué, the strategy was…to postpone resolution of the Taiwan issue…. So we needed to devise an approach…that would preserve Beijing's position and preserve our interests. The idea was to keep working on the Taiwan issue, but we would kick it down the road for later resolution.[174]

Nixon, Lord said, believed that he had "to take some risks in that relationship [with the ROC], in order to move ahead with [the People's Republic of] China."[175] The goal was to normalize relations with Beijing while not damaging relations with Taipei.

Achieving that goal would allow the administration to ideally implement détente. If the administration could balance relations with Beijing and Taipei, then they would fulfill the Nixon Doctrine's affirmation of all U.S. treaty commitments and their desire to remake relations with Beijing, which was critical to transitioning the Cold War from a military conflict to a diplomatic conflict and, eventually, to a thing of the past. Normalized relations between Washington and Beijing would give the United States greater diplomatic leverage over the Soviet Union. Normalization would also reduce the likelihood of a U.S.-PRC war, thus making Nixon's vision of a global military drawdown, a political necessity at home, less of a capitulation to Moscow and more of a strategic shift in how the United States fought the Cold War. Beijing, however, wanted the United States to renounce its relationship with the Republic of China, which would violate the Nixon Doctrine. Faced with this contradiction, Nixon and his administration sought to have it both ways by balancing relations with both Chinese governments.

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[174]Ambassador Winston Lord, interview by Charles Stuart Kennedy and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training: Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, April 28, 1998, 120.
[175] Ibid.

As Lord suggested, and foreign policy historians have argued, Nixon had no long-term plan for how to implement détente.[176] He and his administration were making it up as they went along. Nixon had a vision of where he wanted to end up (partnership with Beijing and Moscow, a smaller global military footprint for the United States, and the transformation of the Cold War from a primarily military conflict to a primarily diplomatic one). He did not know how the details of détente would work out. The status of Taiwan and the ROC was one of those details. Could the United States maintain relations with the ROC while opening relations with Beijing? Nixon wanted to. Would it be possible? The administration did not answer that question up front. On the contrary, Nixon and his administration expended a great deal of effort to balance relations with both governments, putting off a resolution of the issue until it became impossible to do so.

The entire foreign policy apparatus, from the Defense Department to the State Department to the White House, worked to create policies that would implement Nixon's strategy. They sent different signals to Beijing and Taipei, searched for a combination of policies that would adequately convince both Chinese governments that the United States was their friend, and obscured the key disputes between Beijing and Washington in order to give the appearance of common ground on which to build a new relationship. At no time was the administration's course predetermined; there were numerous alternative policies Washington could have adopted at every turn. In 1969, the State Department was sending all sorts of signals to Beijing, trying to see which would stick. In 1971, Nixon could have decided to lose the UN vote on purpose, as Spiro Agnew wanted, or to welcome the PRC into the Security Council and hope that the world would forget the ROC was still a UN member, as William Rogers wanted. In 1972, Washington could have released a joint statement with Beijing that said nothing

[176] John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 293.

substantive whatsoever about the future of U.S.-PRC relations, or it could have accidentally renounced its Mutual Defense Treaty with Taipei. Consistently, Nixon's active intervention was the determining factor in why the administration pursued the course of action it did. Washington was not successful every time it tried to balance Beijing and Taipei; the United States was not able to keep the ROC in the UN. When Nixon returned from Beijing in 1972, however, the United States was maintaining relations with both Chinese governments.

The Nixon China policy was interrupted, however, when Richard Nixon resigned in August 1974 without having fully normalized relations with Beijing. In 1979, Jimmy Carter recognized the People's Republic of China as the legitimate Chinese government and severed official diplomatic ties with the ROC.[177] As part of the agreement with Beijing, arms sales to Taipei stopped for one year.[178] However, the Carter administration did continue the Nixon-era policy of balancing relations with Beijing and Taipei. Before Washington officially recognized the PRC, officials at the ROC desk at the State Department had begun drafting a bill that would give a legal basis for continuing U.S.-ROC relations after official diplomatic ties were severed. Congress passed the Carter administration's bill as the Taiwan Relations Act in 1979.[179] Since then, Washington has continued to manage parallel relations with both Chinese governments.

U.S. arms sales to the ROC resumed in 1980 after the moratorium expired and have continued.[180] Diplomatic cooperation between the United States and Taipei continued as well: Taipei offered one of the largest financial contributions to Operation Desert Storm, although the George H.W. Bush administration turned down the offer lest it prompt Beijing to veto the

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[177] Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes: U.S.-Taiwan Relations Since 1942*, Taiwan in the Modern World (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 5.
[178] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk: United States-Taiwan Relations and the Crisis with China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 134.
[179] Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes*, 151.
[180] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk*, 134; 181; 259.

invasion in the UN Security Council. Then in 1995, another crisis developed in the Taiwan Strait when Beijing tried to influence upcoming elections on Taiwan through intimidation: Beijing conducted military exercises involving 150,000 troops and shot rockets into international waters around two major ROC ports. The Clinton administration responded by dispatching not one, but two aircraft carrier battle groups to the area. The George W. Bush administration initially prioritized relations with Taipei over relations with Beijing, though the relationship became more complicated after 9/11, when the administration sought Beijing's support in the War on Terror.[181]

In the end, Nixon got what he wanted: Washington continues to balance relations with Beijing and Taipei. Even détente's two contradictory goals have been fulfilled: Jimmy Carter normalized relations with Beijing, and as the Clinton administration's response to the 1995 Strait crisis suggests, Washington still takes seriously its commitment to defend the ROC against Beijing. The bizarre nature of U.S.-China relations today in which the United States manages parallel relations with two rival governments began with Richard Nixon's China policy. The old quip "only Nixon could go to China" has become very controversial; historians have argued that a Washington-Beijing rapprochement was inevitable.[182] Frankly, we cannot know if that is true or not with any certainty, because it was Richard Nixon who showed up in Beijing in 1972. He and his administration conceptualized and implemented the transition from official relations with Taipei to a complex balancing act of relations with Taipei and Beijing. This is the international situation that they bequeathed to their successors and that presidents since Nixon have been managing and wrestling with in their own particular ways. What we can do is examine and

[181] Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk*, 178; 219-220; 256-259; 272.
[182] Ibid., 31.

analyze the origins of current U.S.-China relations: why the United States maintains relations with Taipei and Beijing today, and what Nixon wanted to accomplish by doing so in the 1970s.

The origins of Washington's China balancing act are rooted in détente. During Nixon's first term, the administration's China policy was an example of détente on the tactical level. The détente grand strategy had a key internal contradiction. To fulfill the Nixon Doctrine and normalization with the People's Republic of China, the administration needed to establish ties with Beijing and preserve ties with Taipei. Yet both governments jealously guarded their claims to be the "sole legitimate government of all China."[183]

The cancellation of the Taiwan Strait Patrol is an excellent example of how the administration managed that internal contradiction. The two destroyers that regularly passed through the Taiwan Strait were located at the intersection of implementing the Nixon Doctrine and signaling a new era of relations with Beijing and at the intersection of U.S. tension with Beijing and solidarity with Taipei. The patrol's cancellation demonstrates that Taiwan policymaking was a dispersed process. The Defense Department worked to implement the Nixon Doctrine, while the State Department and White House worked to open relations with the PRC and preserve relations with the ROC. That dispersed policymaking process meant that during the cancellation of the Taiwan Strait Patrol the administration reconciled the contradiction between relations with the ROC and the PRC by trying to have both.

The administration's attempt to prevent the ROC's expulsion from the UN in 1971 represents a continuation of balancing relations with both Chinese governments. In this instance, however, the challenges to maintaining a balance were far more daunting than they had been two years earlier. The State Department warned that support for the ROC's UN membership was

[183] "Telegram From the the [sic] Embassy in Australia to the Department of State," March 2, 1971, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1969-1976, Vol. V, United Nations, 1969-1972, ed. Evan M. Duncan (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), Document 332.

rapidly eroding, and the administration was going to have to fight for its ally's seat. Yet at the same time Beijing responded to the administration's overtures and appeared willing to move toward normalization. If the administration worked too hard to defend Taipei's UN seat, it might derail the critical Beijing initiative; if the administration moved too quickly toward Beijing, it might not be able to win enough support for the ROC's UN membership. Once again, the White House was not the only administration entity working on this problem. The State Department worked through the spring and summer to find the best options for keeping Taipei in the UN. Nixon delayed deciding which option to use until he was certain Beijing would move forward with normalization, and then he personally dove into the efforts to defend the ROC's UN seat. In the end, the administration failed to keep the ROC in the UN, but Beijing continued to ease tensions with Washington, and the United States preserved its official ties with the ROC. The UN vote, then, was more a success than a failure in terms of implementing détente.

The Shanghai Communiqué, released at the end of Nixon's historic visit to Beijing in February 1972, was the culmination of this period of U.S. Taiwan policy. Sending different signals to Beijing and Taipei would not balance relations with both Chinese governments in this instance; the administration needed to issue a single statement that would be acceptable to Beijing and Taipei. At this critical moment, Nixon and Kissinger took complete control of the policymaking process. The national security advisor negotiated with Beijing, and he cleared the wording only with the president until the very last minute. Yet even the Shanghai Communiqué demonstrates the importance of administration actors who were not Nixon and Kissinger in making Taiwan policy. In the final hours before the communiqué's release, Nixon listened to Secretary of State Rogers and Assistant Secretary Green's advice over Kissinger's and avoided a repeat of Dean Acheson's defense perimeter fiasco. The final draft of the Taiwan section of the

Shanghai Communiqué balanced relations with Taipei and Beijing by limiting U.S. policy to the lowest common denominator and articulated a policy on which everyone could agree.

Today, Nixon's Taiwan policy is very controversial. Scholars disagree on whether Nixon and Kissinger even wanted to maintain relations with Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government, but the general consensus is that Nixon and Kissinger kicked the ROC to the curb in a mad rush to normalize relations with Communist China, hindered only by their fear of political backlash for moving too quickly away from the anti-Communist ROC. That narrative implies that détente was a coherent foreign policy strategy that conflicted with U.S. domestic political requirements, and frames the problem as a contradiction between foreign and domestic policy.

In fact, Nixon's Taiwan policy was calculated and deliberate. This revised narrative reveals that the status of the ROC and the Taiwan island represented an *internal* contradiction in détente: a contradiction between the Nixon Doctrine and normalization with Beijing. U.S. domestic politics undoubtedly played a role in motivating Nixon to preserve ties with Taipei, but there is a bigger question here about détente's coherence as a grand strategy and how the Nixon administration dealt with the internal contradiction between the Nixon Doctrine and normalization with Communist China. Understanding how the administration made policy toward the ROC demonstrates that they worked to reconcile that contradiction and implement détente by balancing relations with Taipei and Beijing. Thus Nixon's Taiwan policy was the linchpin of his détente grand strategy. From 1969 to 1971, the administration worked together in a dispersed policymaking process to balance relations with both Chinese governments, to uphold the Nixon Doctrine and achieve the opening to China, and to implement détente on the tactical level.

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